PLATO'S *PHAEDRUS*

Socrates: My dear Phaedrus, where have you been? And where are you going? **227a**

Phaedrus: I've been with Lysias, Kephalos' son,[1] Socrates, and now I'm going for a walk outside the city walls. I've been with him a long time, since dawn in fact. Now I'm headed for the country, following the advice of our friend, Akoumenos,[2] who says it's more refreshing to walk there than in our city's covered colonnades.[3] **b**

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1 Kephalos was what the Athenians called a *metic*, a resident alien with special legal rights. He was extremely wealthy with a fortune made from selling arms. He lived in Piraeus, Athens' port, where he also had his arms factory, and it was at his home that the *Republic* takes place. Lysias' brother, Polemarchos, is mentioned at 257c for being more philosophical than Lysias. Polemarchos has a speaking part in the *Republic* and was killed by the Thirty in 404 BCE for his money.

2 Akoumenos is a doctor, and father (or older relative) of Eruximachos, also a doctor, Phaedrus' lover, and a speaker in Plato's *Symposium*. All three are sympathetic to the new sophistic movement. References to doctors and medical terminology permeate the dialogue, in the discussion both of love and of rhetoric. Like most ancient Greeks, Lysias considered love a sickness (231d), a view which Socrates shares in his first speech but challenges in his second speech when he says that the love of beauty is "the only doctor for the soul's greatest labors and pains" (252b). At the end of the dialogue, the art of medicine is compared to the art of rhetoric, one affecting the body, the other the soul (270b-d). The *Phaedrus* also raises the question of whether a practitioner of an art can pass his knowledge to another, either as a teacher to a pupil or a father to a son (268c-269a).

3 Phaedrus does not say "the city's covered colonnades," but simply *dromoi* (literally: "(open) race courses"). Elsewhere Plato uses the phrase "covered

Socrates: Well said, my dear companion.[4] So Lysias was in town, it seems.

Phaedrus: Yes, at Epikrates' house, where Morukhos use to live, near the temple of Olympian Zeus.[5]

Socrates: How were you spending your time there? Let me guess: Lysias was feasting you with his speeches.

Phaedrus: You'll find out, if you have time to come along and listen.

Socrates: What? Don't you think I'd consider this "more important than business itself," as Pindar puts it, to hear how you and Lysias were spending your time?

c **Phaedrus:** Lead on, then.

Socrates: I will, if you speak.

Phaedrus: As a matter of fact, Socrates, our talk suited you well, because we spent our time talking about love. For Lysias has written about a beautiful boy and how he was pursued, but not by a lover, and it's just in this that Lysias was so refined. He argues that favors should be granted to one who is *not* in love with you rather than to one who is.

Socrates: What a noble man. Would that he had written that favors should be granted to someone who is poor rather than rich, and to someone who is getting on in years rather than to a younger man, and other

d such qualities which apply to me and to most of us. Now that speech would be really clever and of public use. As it is, I have already built up such a desire to hear his words that if you were to walk all the way to Megara—as far as its wall and back again (as the good doctor Herodikos prescribes), I wouldn't leave your side for all the world.[6]

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runways" to refer to a gymnasium's colonnades and I assume that *dromoi* here is an abbreviated reference to the same place, a favorite haunt for young men to congegrate.

4 Socrates most frequently calls Phaedrus *phile*, "my friend" (11 times). For "friend," "my dear companion," and other vocative addresses to Phaedrus, and for the forms of address which Phaedrus uses in return, see the Glossary under *Vocative addresses*. Also see notes, 11, 40, 41, and 96.

5 The comic poet Aristophanes singles out Morukhos for his lavish living. We are to assume that Lysias is also living in luxury. Images of feeding occur frequently in the first half of the *Phaedrus*, playful metaphors which become more bold in Socrates' second speech when he says that the soul feeds on or shares in the banquet of heavenly Being (247e; cf. 246e and 248b).

6 Greek allows for a conditional construction not available in English. Socrates begins the if-clause as though it were a remote possibility, but concludes the condition in strongest possible terms ("I wouldn't leave your side").

Phaedrus: What are you saying, my Socrates, best of men? Do you think that I, a man with no speaking skills,[7] will be able to recall in a manner worthy of Lysias—the most clever of our writers today—those things which he spent so much time, in leisure, arranging?[8] I'm far from that. And yet I'd rather have this ability than piles of gold. **228a**

Socrates: Phaedrus, I know you as well as I know myself; and if I don't know Phaedrus, I've forgotten myself also. But I've forgotten neither of us. I know full well that listening to Lysias' speech Phaedrus did not listen just once, but that he frequently urged him to repeat it; and Lysias was more than happy to comply. Nor was this enough for Phaedrus, **b** but in the end he took the book and kept examining those parts which he especially coveted. Doing this since dawn he grew weary and got up from his seat to go for a walk; and now I'd say, I swear it by the dog,[9] that he knows the entire speech, unless it happens to be terribly long. Then he was headed outside the city walls to practice it. But coming upon the man who is made sick with desire just to hear speeches, Phaedrus, seeing him—merely seeing him—was delighted that he should have a fellow bacchic reveler, and then he urged Socrates to lead on. When that lover of speeches asked him to speak, Phaedrus **c** was coy, acting as if he wasn't interested, but in the end he meant to speak, even by force, if no one wanted to listen. So, Phaedrus, ask that man to do now what he will soon do anyway.

Phaedrus: I'd better speak then as well as I can, since you don't seem about to let me go before I speak in one way or another.[10]

Socrates: That's certainly true.

Phaedrus: All right then, here's what I shall do. In reality, Socrates, I most **d** certainly have not learnt all the words. But the general thought of Lysias' speech, and how he contrasted the lover and the non-lover—each of these things I shall go through in the order he said them, touching on the chief points, beginning with the first.

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7 "A man with no speaking skills" translates *idiotes;* see the *Interpretative Essay* (pages 91-4) and the Glossary under *Unskilled speaker*.

8 This verb (*syntithemi*) appears four times in the space of fifteen lines at the end of the dialogue (278c-d).

9 One of Socrates' favorite oaths; it apparently refers to an Egyptian deity. See Plato's *Gorgias* 482d.

10 Socrates' compulsion reverses the scene at the beginning of the *Republic* where he wants to walk back to Athens from the port (Piraeus) but is restrained and compelled to speak.

Socrates: Only if first, my love,[11] you show me what you have in your left hand under your cloak. I'll hazard it's the actual text. And if it is, bear
e in mind that, as fond of you as I am,[12] I am not prepared to let you practice your speaking skills on me, not when Lysias is actually present among us. Come now, show it.

Phaedrus: All right, stop. You've dashed any hope, Socrates, that I had of practicing on you. But where would you like to sit down and have us read?

229a **Socrates:** Let's turn off the path here and go along the Ilissos; then we'll sit down wherever you find a quiet spot.

Phaedrus: It's lucky, it seems, that I happen to be barefoot. You, of course, always are. So it'll be easy for us to walk with our feet in the water, and not unpleasant either, especially in this season and at this time of the day.

Socrates: Lead on then, and keep an eye out for a place to sit.

Phaedrus: Do you see that very tall plane tree?

Socrates: Yes, surely.

b **Phaedrus:** There's shade and a moderate[13] breeze, with grass as well for sitting, or, if we prefer, we could lie down.

Socrates: Won't you lead the way?

Phaedrus: Tell me, Socrates; isn't it around here near the Ilissos where Boreas the North Wind is said to have seized Oreithuia?

Socrates: So the story goes.

Phaedrus: Is it around here, then? The waters, at least, are lovely, pure, and clear; the kind of place where girls would like to play.

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11 "My love" translates *philotes* (an abstract noun for the more usual concrete *phile*), a form of address found in Aristophanes; only here in Plato as a term of address. In conventional usage, *philotes* ranges in meaning from "friendhip" to "sexual intercourse." Once Socrates calls Phaedrus "my boy" (*pai*) (267c), a term lovers used for the beloved. See notes 40 and 41, and the Glossary under *Love* and *Vocative addresses*.

12 "To be fond of" translates the verb *phileo*; for the range in meaning of this word, see the Glossary under *To Love*.

13 Literally, a "well-measured breeze": *pneuma metrion*. The word *metron*, "measure," runs through the whole dialogue like a nerve, exploring from a variety of angles a central theme of the *Phaedrus* concerning measured speech. This will not be the only instance in the *Phaedrus* where a physical characteristic of the grove prefigures an essential theme or word in the dialogue. The grove literally embodies and makes possible the discourse of the *Phaedrus*. Socrates and Phaedrus have crossed the river and are sitting on the far side from the city (cf. 242a-c). For more on the grove, see notes 16 and 18; for *metrios*, see the Interpretative Essay (pages 92-4) and the Glossary under *Grove* and *Unskilled speaker*.

Socrates: No, but further downstream two or three stades[14] where we cross the river to the district of Agra. I think there's even an altar to Boreas in that vicinity. c

Phaedrus: I never knew exactly where it was. But tell me, Socrates, in the name of Zeus, do you really think that this mythical story is true?

Socrates: What do you mean? If, like the wise men of our day, I didn't believe in these stories, I wouldn't be so out of place. And in my wisdom, I would say that the Borean wind blew Oreithuia down from the rocks nearby while she was playing with Pharmakeia. And dying in this way, she is said to have been seized by Boreas from here—or from d the Areopagos, for there is also a story that she was seized from there. Although in some ways I find such explanations ingenious, Phaedrus, it's also true that they're the mark of a clever, hard-working, and not altogether fortunate man, if only because after these explanations he will then have to correct the mistaken beliefs about the shape of Horse Centaurs, and after that the Chimaira. Then mobs of Gorgon-like creatures, Pegasuses and other monsters will flood over him, not to men- e tion other marvelously imagined oddities. All those non-believers employing some boorish sophistication will make everything conform to probability, and they also will need a great deal of free time. But for me there's no such leisure. And, my dear friend, the reason is this: I am still not able to "know myself," as the Delphic inscription enjoins, and it seems laughable for me to think about other things when I am still ignorant about myself. So leaving those matters aside, I believe 230a whatever people say these days about those creatures, and I don't inquire about them but about myself. For me, the question is whether I happen to be some sort of beast even more complex in form and more tumultuous than the hundred-headed Typhon, or whether I am something simpler and gentler, having a share by nature of the divine and the unTyphonic.[15] But, my dear companion, while we've been talking, haven't we reached the tree to which you were leading us?

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14 About 1/4 mile.

15 Typhon is a monster with a hundred heads which can speak in a variety of voices at the same time. Socrates twice puns on the name Typhon, in the first instance as if the name came from the verb *typhomai*, "to be ablaze, to be caught up in a passion"; in the second instance, when Socrates questions whether he might be *atyphos*, i.e. "not deluded." In this usage, he implies that Typhon comes from *typhos*, a word for a fever which brings on a stupor, and by extension comes to mean "delusion" or "nonsense"; the negative of that *atyphos* means "humble, not arrogant, not deluded." Elsewhere Socrates says of all men: "surely some terrible, savage, and lawless form of desire is in every man, even in some of us who seem to be entirely measured (*metrios*)" (Rep. 9.572b). No mortal has an absolutely simple soul. In this dialogue, one can question who in fact has the more complex soul, closer

b **Phaedrus:** To be sure, this is it.

Socrates: By Hera, it's a beautiful resting-place.[16] The plane-tree is tall and has wonderfully spreading branches; and there is the lovely shade of a tall willow shrub in beautiful bloom, diffusing throughout the place a most sweet perfume. And below the plane-tree a graceful spring flows with its cooling waters,[17] as our feet bear witness. Judging from the statues and images, the spot seems sacred, a haunt of the Nymphs and
c the river god Achelous. And, if you permit me to go on, how adorable and delightful is the gentle breeze, re-echoing with the summery, high pitch of the cicadas' chorus. And most refined of all is the grassy slope, gentle enough for lying down and resting your head most beautifully. I couldn't have hoped for a better guide, my dear Phaedrus.

Phaedrus: And you seem, my astonishing man, to be someone most out of place.[18] As you say, you seem like a foreigner being guided around
d rather than one from these parts, and never to have left town or traveled abroad. Indeed, I'd say, you had never ventured at all outside the city walls.

Socrates: Pardon me, my excellent friend. I'm in love with learning. Country places and trees do not wish to teach me anything, but human

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in nature to Typhon's: Phaedrus or Socrates' soul. At 257b, Socrates says that Phaedrus "goes in two directions." See note 95.

16 "Resting-place" translates *katagoge*, literally "a bringing down," an unusual word in Plato's Athens. In light of the central myth of the *Phaedrus* about the immortal soul falling down (*kata*) from heaven to earth and through love and language having the capacity to make an upward ascent (*agein ano*), the literal meaning of *katagoge* should not be ignored. In all of Plato, the term is only used here, and at 259a5 in the more usual adjectival form. In short, this grove functions as a conduit, allowing for movement up and down. *See* notes 18 and 55. In reference to the plane tree (*platanos*), one wonders whether Plato isn't punning on his own name (Platon in the moninative, Platonos in the gentive); for another possible pun on his name, see 246c. The willow shrub (*vitex agnus castus*) is found throughout the Mediterranean and is known for its fragrant violet or white flowers and for its alleged anti-aphrodisiac powers. See the Glossary under *Grove*.

17 Socrates is paraphrasing a line from the lyric poet Sappho (fragment 2).

18 "Most out of place" (*atopotatos*) picks up what Socrates says of himself when he says that he would not be out of place (*atopos*, 229c) if, like the wise, he did not believe in myths; he also described mythic creatures as "things out of place," translated there as "oddities" (229e). As is often the case with Socrates, Phaedrus' characterization of him as "most out of place" is steeped in paradox. Socrates is, as Phaedrus claims, indeed out of place when out of the city, but in coming to the grove Socrates is open to the divine in a new way (cf. 241e). If he were not in this divine place, it is doubtful whether Socrates could describe "the place of Being," "beyond heaven" which no *poietes* has ever described before (cf. 262d). See notes 13, 16, and 55.

beings in the city do. But you seem to have discovered a drug to entice me into walking outside the city.[19] Just like dangling green branches or fruit of some kind in front of a hungry animal to lead him on, so you are likely to lead me through all of Attica or anywhere you want, e
simply by holding words in a book in front of my nose. But now that we have come here, I think I'll lie down. Find any position you consider comfortable and begin reading, won't you?

Phaedrus: Listen then.

You know about my affairs, and you've heard how I think they benefit us both, when these things work out. Nor do I ex- 231a
pect to fail to get what I ask for just because I don't happen to be in love with you.

When lovers lose their passion, they come to regret whatever goods they may have conferred, but these people never have a change of heart.[20] They confer benefits according to their means, and not by necessity, but willingly, just as they would manage their own family interests as well as they could.

Besides, lovers keep a tally of the costs they incur and of the benefits they confer because of love, and when they add b
to the list the labor they exert, they believe that they have already paid back a sufficient gratitude to those they once loved. But non-lovers don't blame love as an excuse for their neglect of family matters, nor do they keep a scorecard of labors endured, and they don't blame loved ones for problems with relatives. So actually when such ills are cleared out of the way nothing is left but for non-lovers to do with zeal whatever they think would please their partners.

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19 Frequently in Plato, discourse is described as a healing drug. *Pharmakos*, "drug" (230d), is the simple noun form of Pharmakeia (229c), the playmate of the girl who was killed by the North Wind near this spot. For other uses of the word, always important in Plato, see 242e, and 274e and 275a at the end of the *Phaedrus* in regard to writing and the god Theuth. See the Glossary under *Drug*.

20 Lysias begins his speech by addressing an unnamed you (in the singular) but often references to lovers, non-lovers, and the beloved are in the impersonal, generalizing plural. He never addresses the beloved in the vocative, giving the impression that the speech could be said by anyone to anyone. Socrates, by contrast, in his speeches uses the vocative address and only speaks of the loved one in the singular (except for 252d). The ancient Greeks admired Lysias for his clear and lucid style, but in this speech his terminology is often extremely vague and loose: In the first line, "affairs" translates *pragmata*, a word usually used for business or other public actions, but may on rare occasion refer to love affairs; in stead of specifying non-lovers, in this sentence Lysias simply says "for these people on the other hand."

c Besides, if it is right to value lovers because they claim that they are specially fond of those they love and are ready to gratify their loved ones in word and deed, being hateful to everyone else, it is easy to see, provided lovers tell the truth, that they will value future loved ones more than those they love now. And it is clear that lovers will treat their old loves badly if the new loves so desire. And anyway, how is it plau-
d sible[21] to hand over something so precious[22] to someone with such an affliction that no experienced person would even try to cure it: for lovers certainly agree that they are sick rather than of sound mind, and they realize that although they are thinking poorly they are powerless to do anything about it. So how can these men, once they have regained their lost senses, possibly continue to hold those beliefs which they had when they were in the grip of love?

And another thing: if you were to choose the best from the pool of lovers, your pickings would be slim; but if you were to select the one who best suits you from the general pool, your
e range of choice would be great. So actually there is far greater hope of finding someone from this group who is worthy of your friendship.

Now, if you are worried about conventional mores and fear the scorn of people when they learn what you are doing, it is
232a plausible that lovers (being inclined to think that they are just as worthy of emulation by others as they are by themselves) will be excited to talk about their affairs and to toot their own horn, revealing to one and all that they have not labored in vain. But non-lovers, possessing a measure of self-control, choose to do what is best rather than to follow in the footsteps of public opinion.

Besides, everyone finds out about lovers—it's inevitable—when they see lovers following after their loves and doing any-
b thing for them. So whenever the two are seen in conversation, everyone actually thinks that they are together, having just indulged in their passions or being just about to. But no one dreams of finding fault with non-lovers for their rendezvous, knowing that such talk is necessary for friendship or some other pleasure.

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21 It is a hallmark of sophistic rhetoric to argue according to the plausible (*eikos*); for the general point, see 272ff. For *eikos* in Lysias' speech, see 231c (here), 231e, 232c, 233a.

22 i.e. chastity.

And another thing: perhaps you are afraid, thinking that it is difficult for friendships to last or that in other circumstances when a calamity arises both parties share the pain, but when you have given away freely what is most important to you,[23] you are the one who gets hurt the most. If so, it's plausible that you would fear lovers more. For all kinds of things cause them to grieve, and they think that everything is designed to hurt them. Consequently, they try to prevent those they love from meeting other people, fearful lest a wealthy person will outspend them or an educated person outsmart them. They are forever on the lookout, guarding against the possible influence of anyone who might have some advantage or other. Persuading you to become loathsome to everyone else, they leave you without friends. But if you look out after yourself and keep a cooler head than your lovers, you will end up quarrelling with them. Non-lovers, however, having acquired through virtue what they asked for, would never be jealous of your fellowship with others. Rather, they would despise those who won't associate with you on the assumption that they are being slighted and not benefiting from these encounters.[24] So actually there is far greater hope to gain friendship rather than enmity from this business.

And another thing: many lovers desire your body before they know your character or are familiar with your personal traits. So it isn't clear whether they still will wish to remain friends when they cease to desire you. But because non-lovers are friendly with each other before they exchanged favors, it is implausible that their engagement in these happy experiences would diminish their friendship; rather such things remain as tokens of things to come.

And another thing: it is fitting that you will become a better person if you are won over by me rather than by a lover. Far beyond what is best, lovers will praise whatever you say or do, in part because they fear that you will come to loathe them, in part because passion clouds their judgment. Love thinks like this: when lovers fare badly love makes them grieve over things which bring little

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23 That is, when you have offered sexual favors.

24 The lack of pronouns in this passage makes it difficult to determine who the "they" refers to, that is, whether the non-lover or the beloved is excluded from a group. It is also unclear who is thought to receive the benefit from such gatherings. Arguments have been made for both non-lover and the beloved; I am inclined to believe that the beloved is being referred to in both cases.

pain to others, and when they do well love forces them to praise even those things which are hardly worthy of pleasure. So actually it is far more fitting for loved ones to pity rather than to emulate them.

If I have won you over, first of all I will keep your company,
c not [only] looking out for immediate pleasure but also for future benefits, because I am not weakened by love but am in full possession of myself.[25] Nor do I get irate over trivial matters and only slowly build a mild anger from big problems, forgiving unintended mistakes and trying to forestall deliberate transgressions. These are proofs of a friendship which will last a long time. But if you believe that enduring friendship is not possible
d without erotic love, you should take to heart that we would not hold strong feelings for our sons, or fathers and mothers. Nor would we have trusted friends, who do not crop up from this sort of passion but from other kinds of pursuits.

Besides, if it is right to give favor to those in need, it is also entirely fitting to do a good turn to the most indigent, and not to the best people, as those who are saved from the worst ills will bestow the most thanks.

e And another thing: even at dinner parties it is worthy not to invite friends but beggars and those in need of a meal. These are the people who will adore[26] you and follow you and come to your door and be especially pleased and express their gratitude and pray for your success.

Or perhaps it is fitting to grant favors to those who are in the best position to return the favor and not to the desperately needy—
234a in short, not only to beggars but to those worthy of your work; not to those who will enjoy you in your prime but to those who will share their own wealth with you when you have begun to age; not to those who toot their own horn, telling others when they have had their way with you, but to those who will always keep silent from a sense of decorum; not to those who are serious for a brief time, but to those who will be life-long friends; not to those who
b seek a pretext for enmity when their desire has dried up, but to those who will show their true merit when your bloom has ceased.

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25 It is difficult to capture the complexity of this sentence in English. "Only" is not in the Greek, "but also" is. Lysias seems to be hinting that the non-lover *also* looks for immediate pleasure. For Socrates' severe sanction of those who desire to remain in full self-possession, see 256e-257a.

26 "Adore" translates *agapao* (233e3); see Glossary under *To Love*. See note 53.

Remember what I have said and take this to heart: friends chastise lovers for pursuing affairs badly, but relatives have never blamed non-lovers for planning their own business poorly because of love.

Perhaps you might ask if I advise you to grant favors to any and all non-lovers. Of course not. A lover would not demand that you have such thoughts for all lovers—for in that case he would feel that the value of each favor granted was diminished; nor would you be able to keep each favor secret. From this sort of thing, there should be no harm, only mutual benefit. c

My words are, I trust, sufficient. But if you desire more, thinking that I have left something out, all you need do is ask.[27]

Socrates, what do you think of the speech? Isn't it extraordinary, both in its language and in other regards?

Socrates: Indeed, divinely spirited, my dear companion; naturally I'm stunned. And this I owe to you, Phaedrus, because while I was looking at you reading, you seemed lit up[28] by the speech. Thinking that you perceived such matters better than I, I followed you throughout, caught up in a bacchic frenzy with you, a divine source.[29] d

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27 Lysias ends his speech with a play on words. In order for it to make a complete sentence, the last word must be the verb "ask," the accent falling on the second syllable. But if the first syllable were accented (as the manuscripts read), the word would mean "love," a noun in the accusative case and a form used repeatedly throughout this speech. The sentence would then be incomplete and translated as follows: "Thinking I have left something out, if you still desire love..." Sense requires the first reading, but we shouldn't rule out that Lysias plays upon the sound, inviting his audience to imagine that love is necessary, after all, in a "love relationship." For the same word play, see Plato's *Symposium* 199c1. A good number of the phrases and idioms in this speech are found in Lysias but not in such concentration. The length of the sentences in this speech are longer, on average, than those in Lysias; indeed on average they equal the length of sentences in Socrates' second speech in this dialogue. It is unlikely that this speech is actually by Lysias, but rather a clever and not overly kind parody.

28 Socrates is punning on Phaedrus' name which means "bright." The word he uses here for "lit up" is *ganusthai*, and related to the name of Zeus' lover Ganymede ("Bright plans/counsels") mentioned at 255c.

29 "A divine source" translates what in Greek says "divine head" (cf. "dear head" at 264a). Language describing divine possession recurs repeatedly throughout the *Phaedrus*, but Socrates' understanding of the nature of this possession changes over the course of the dialogue. At this point in the *Phaedrus*, Socrates' divine possession is still imperfect. See Glossary under *Divine possession*.

Phaedrus: Come. Do you intend to play like this?

Socrates: Do you really think that I am playing, and not deeply serious?

e **Phaedrus**: No, not at all serious, Socrates, but before Zeus, the god of friendship, declare in earnest—could any other Greek make a greater or better speech on the same theme?

Socrates: What! Must you and I praise the speech *for this*—that the speech-maker[30] said what needed to be said—and not merely for the fact that each of its phrases was clear, compact, and well-turned? But if we must do that, it will be necessary for me to concede to you since *that* escaped
235a my attention, worthless as I am in such matters. I was only thinking about its rhetoric, and this, I suspect, even Lysias himself would think hardly sufficient. For he seemed to me, Phaedrus—unless you can show otherwise—to say the same thing two or three times over, as if he was not particularly adept at speaking in depth on the same theme; or perhaps such things did not concern him. In truth, he seemed to me to have a youthful swagger, showing off how he could say the same thing first in one way, then in another, and doing both rather well.

b **Phaedrus**: Rubbish, Socrates; the material was handled extremely well, He didn't leave out any of the items that are naturally implied by the topic, and everything was given worthy treatment, so that no one could add to what he said or say more or say it better.

Socrates: I simply can't agree with you. If I did, a number of old and wise men and women who have spoken or written on the subject would scold me.[31]

c **Phaedrus**: Who are they? And where have you heard anything better on this subject?

Socrates: I can't come up with names right now, but I clearly have heard some. Perhaps it was the beautiful Sappho, or the skillful Anacreon, or even one of the prose writers. What do I call on as my proof, you wonder. My divinely spirited friend, there's a swelling in my chest, and I feel as if I could, against his speech, make a different one, and no worse either. I'm well aware that I myself know nothing about these things, conscious as I am of my own ignorance. I suppose it remains,
d then, that I have been filled by foreign streams from somewhere which have poured into me, through my ears, as into a vessel. But in my stupidity I have even forgotten how and from whom I've heard these things.

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30 For speech-maker, see the Interpretative Essay (p. 91) and Glossary under *Unskilled speaker;* see notes 37 and 94.

31 Socrates is undoubtedly being ironic, as only in a most guarded way does Socrates (in Plato) find wisdom in ancient writers. Sappho and Anacreon are lyric poets who sing of the sting of love.

Phaedrus: Even so, my most noble friend, you have spoken very beautifully. No need to tell me how and from whom you have heard this, even if I were to bid you, but go ahead and do what you said: you promised to give another speech with different arguments, better than the one in this book and no shorter. And I promise you that, just like the nine Archons at Athens, I'll dedicate at Delphi a full-sized, gold image not only of myself but also of you.[32] **e**

Socrates: You are the dearest man and truly made of gold,[33] Phaedrus, if you think I claim that Lysias completely missed the mark and if you think that I am really capable of making completely new arguments. Even the worst prose writer has some merit, I suspect. For example, to begin with, in this speech do you think one could argue that the non-lover should be favored over the lover without praising the one for keeping his head and censuring the other for being out of his mind? **236a** At any rate, these are the necessary points. Can other points be made? Perhaps so, but one must allow these arguments, I think, and even pardon them. In cases like this, one must not praise the discovery of the argument but its arrangement. But in cases when speakers introduce non-essential arguments which are difficult to find, one can praise discovery in addition to arrangement.

Phaedrus: I agree; in my view you have spoken with due measure.[34] Therefore, this is what I'll do in turn: I shall grant the one essential proposition that the lover is sicker than the non-lover. But regarding all the rest, if you deliver a speech which is fuller and more appropriate than his, may you be set up as a metal statue, not one cast in bronze but beaten out with a hammer, and placed next to the statue of the Cypselids at Olympia. **b**

Socrates: Have you taken this seriously, Phaedrus, because in teasing you I attacked your darling, Lysias? Do you really think that I'll actually try to exceed his wisdom and skill with a more varied and subtle speech?[35]

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32 According to Aristotle, archons in Athens took an oath upon taking office to set up a golden statue if they broke the law; cf. *Constitution of Athens* 7.1.

33 In typical fashion, Socrates turns physical matter into a metaphor of inner substance. See 228a and Socrates' view about wealth in his prayer to Pan at the end of the dialogue (279b-c).

34 For the play upon the idea of measured speech, see the Interpretative Essay (pages 91-94) and Glossary under *Unskilled speaker*

35 "More varied and subtle" translates *poikiloteros* (lit. "dappled") (236b). The positive form of the adjective appears at 277c to describe certain forms of speech and certain types of soul. Socrates' terminology here conforms with that in the *Republic* where *poikilos* also describes a complex soul, which is often drawn to materialistic and inappropriate desires, including pleasure in a democratic regime, and it once describes a soul with a bestial nature (588c).

Phaedrus: As to this, my dear, you have been trapped by the same wres-
c tling hold you used on me. You've got to speak, no question about it, as best you can. Otherwise we'll be forced to act like vulgar comedians, exchanging jibes. Don't force me to say: "My dear Socrates, if I don't know Socrates, I have also forgotten myself," and "he was coy, acting as if he wasn't eager to speak." But understand that we shall not leave here until you say what you said was on your chest. We're
d alone here in a deserted place, and I'm stronger than you—and younger. For all these reasons, "take my meaning,"[36] and don't wait to be coerced, but speak voluntarily.

Socrates: But, my blessed Phaedrus, I'll be a laughing stock, as I—unskilled and improvising on the spot—go up against a fine maker of speeches.[37]

Phaedrus: Don't you see how it is? An end to this mock modesty! I'm pretty sure that I've got something which, when I say it, will force you to speak.

Socrates: May you never say it, then.

Phaedrus: But I shall, and it will be an oath. I swear—and by whom? let's
e see...how about by this plane-tree here?—I swear, in truth, that if you refuse to deliver your speech in the presence of this tree, I shall never—I mean, never—show you, or report to you, another speech by anyone else.

Socrates: Ah, you brute, you've found out how to force a speech-loving man to do your bidding.

Phaedrus: So why this twisting and turning?

Socrates: Now that you have sworn that oath, I'll stop. For, how could I stay away from such banquets?

237a **Phaedrus**: Speak, then.

Socrates: Do you know how I'll do it?

Phaedrus: How?

Socrates: I'll cover my head up completely and then speak. In that way as I run through my speech as quickly as possible, I won't lose my way in shame when I look at you.

Phaedrus: Just give your speech. As for the rest, do whatever you want.

Socrates: Come, Muses, whether you are called sweet-voiced from the quality

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36 In "Take my meaning," Paedrus quotes Pindar, frag. 105.1, a famous tag also in Aristophanes' *Birds* (945); cf. Pindar, *Pythian* 3.80.

37 For Socrates' marked use of terms here, see Introduction (pages 91-94) and Glossary under *Unskilled speaker*. For a play upon the word *metrios* in the context of *poietes*, *idiotes*, and Socrates' speech, see note 34. All adjectival forms of *poietes*, on the other hand, clearly mean "poetic" (245a, 248e, 257a, 265b).

of your song or from your sweet Ligurian origins, "begin to sing with me" my fable[38] which this best of men at my side forces me to speak. He's eager that his companion, whom he already thinks is wise and skilled, seem even wiser and more skilled.[39] b

There once was a darling boy, a young man really, a very beautiful young man, and he had a great number of lovers.[40] One of them was wily and persuaded the young man that he was not in love with him at all when in fact he loved him no less than the others. When he was making his case, he tried to persuade the young lad that he ought to grant his favors to someone who didn't love him rather than to one who did. His argument went like this:

Above all else, my darling boy,[41] there is only one way to begin if someone means to deliberate successfully. By necessity,[42] he must know what he is deliberating about or he will miss the mark completely. Most people, however, don't realize that they do not know the true essence of an argument. Because they have not reached an agreement at the beginning of an investigation, they proceed as if they know, resorting c

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38 Socrates will call this speech a fable (*mythos*) again at 241e, but he uses the same word to characterize the story of the charioteer and the two horses in the palinode (253c). For more on the word, see Glossary under *Fable*.

39 In a forced etymology, Socrates plays on the similarity in sounds between *ligeiai*, a common word in archaic poetry meaning "shrill or high-pitched" (rendered here "sweet voiced") used to describe Muses, singers and their songs, and the *Ligurian* race in northern Greece. "Begin to sing with me" is a common phrase found at the beginning of archaic songs. This is the *only* speech in all of Plato where a speaker calls upon the Muses.

40 "Boy" translates *pais*, a word used for child, son, daughter, or slave (of any age), and in sexual terms for one's darling or beloved, who can range in age from fifteen to thirty-five. "A young man" translates *meirakiskos*, which refers to someone in his early twenties who has not yet started a career.

41 The "darling boy" addressed in this speech goes unnamed, although it is tempting to think that Socrates is playfully addressing Phaedrus whom once in the dialogue he clearly addresses as *pais* (267c). If so, this speech, as well as Socrates' next speech, may be seen as a form of seduction, as if Phaedrus were the object of Socrates' desire. Socrates, as a lover of wisdom, wishes to seduce Phaedrus' soul, not his body. Socrates addresses this "boy" at the beginning and end of both his speeches: cf. 237b and 241c, for the first speech, and 243e and 256e, as well as 252b, for the palinode. Cf. *kallipais* at 261a and note.

42 "By necessity" here translates *ananke*, "necessity," a word used ten times in this short speech. Contrary to Lysias who persistently argues by plausibility (i.e., *eikos*) and who is eager to describe a love which is freed from necessity (cf. 231a and 232a), Socrates' agrument in this speech is predicated upon necessity, both in terms of the necessary ways to make an argument and of the passions when they rule over reason.

to what seems plausible, when they have agreed neither with themselves or with others. May you and I, then, not suffer what we fault in others. And since we are engaged in a discussion about whether one should enter into a friendship with one who loves you rather than with
d one who doesn't, we should agree upon a definition of love, showing what it is and what power it has.[43] Then we can look back at the definition and use it as a point of reference, considering whether love brings harm or benefit.

Everyone knows that love is a form of desire, and we know that even those who are not in love desire beautiful things. How then shall we distinguish the one who loves from the one who doesn't? Further, one must realize that in each of us there are two forces which rule and guide us and that we follow both wherever they lead. One of them is our inborn desire for pleasure, the other an acquired opinion in pur-
e suit of the best.[44] Sometimes the two, lodged within us, agree; at other times, they quarrel. Then, sometimes one, sometimes the other gains the upper hand. When right opinion with reason rules and leads toward
238a the best, we call this moderation.[45] But when desire irrationally drags us toward pleasures and rules over us, we call this excess. To be sure, excess has many names—many limbs and many forms[46]—and when one of these forms happens to be preeminent, a person takes its name, hardly a beautiful or praiseworthy name to have. When the passion for food, for example, rules over our best reasoning and our other de-
b sires, we call this gluttony and the person in the grips of this desire, gluttonous. Or take the tyrannizing passion for wine, which leads a drinker in that direction; it is clear what name to call him. And in

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43 "What is it?" *hoion estin* (237c8). Socrates' speech on love in the *Symposium* begins with precisely the same phrasing (cf. 199c7). In both dialogues, Socrates sets himself apart from previous speakers by beginning with a definition, the rest of the speech building on that definition.

44 "Opinion" translates *doxa*, which in context can be taken as "judgment;" compare "straight judgment or opinion," *doxa orthe*, in the *Republic*, 4.431cd. At 253d, it is translated "glory," another of its meanings.

45 See Interpretative Essay (p. 82) and Glossary under *Moderation*. Nowhere else in Plato does Socrates or anyone else qualify the virtue of (mortal) moderation as he does at 256e-257a.

46 Here I follow the manuscript reading *polyeides*, "many forms,"—also used at 270d and 271a—and not the Oxford editor who prints *polymeres* ("of many parts"), never found in Plato. The manuscript reading brings out more clearly that many-limbed arrogance, or hybris, is a hybrid creature and it recalls, perhaps, the multi-formed (*polyplokoteros)* composition of Typhon (230a), the Centaurs and the other mythic oddities (*atopiai*, 229d). See note 132.

regard to kindred cases of other desires, and the names for those kindred desires—when that desire is ruling for the time being—it is clear how each should be labeled.

It's relatively clear already, I suppose, why all this has been said, but things are altogether clearer if the reason is spelled out rather than left unstated: when passion without reason rules over straight-minded opinion and is itself driven toward the pleasure of beauty, and, further, when this passion is violently moved by kindred desires toward the beauty of the body and is victorious, it takes its name from that very force and is called love.[47] c

My dear Phaedrus, do I seem to you, as I do to myself, to be caught in the grip of a divine passion?[48]

Phaedrus: There's no question, Socrates; a most uncustomary fluency has seized you.

Socrates: Then keep silent and listen. In fact, the gods do seem to occupy this place; so don't be astonished[49] if I frequently become Nymph-possessed as the speech continues. Even as it is, I'm not far from speaking in dithyrambs. d

Phaedrus: Very true.

Socrates: You're responsible for that; still, hear the rest. Perhaps the assault might be averted. But this is in the hands of a god; we, however, must turn our attention back to the boy in this speech.

Very well, my brave fellow. We have already described and given a definition of the thing we have been deliberating about. Now, it remains for us to examine what good or ill will plausibly come from a lover or non-lover to the boy who grants him favors. A man who is ruled by desire and is a slave to pleasure contrives—inevitably, I suppose—to reap the greatest possible pleasure for himself from the beloved.[50] For a sick man, anything that offers little or no resistance is sweet, and e

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47 *Eros*, the word for love here, is the second to last word in a long and skillfully constructed periodic sentence. For all intents and purposes, Socrates ends his speech with the word *eros*, as Lysias ended his speech with a play on the sound *erota*, and he plays on its meaning as if *eros* derived from *rhome*, force.

48 "To be caught" (238c6) is in the perfect tense in Greek, a tense used to describe a past action whose effect is still felt in the present.

49 This speech will not astonish Phaedrus, but Socrates' palinode will; see 257c2 and 257c5. For "Nymph-possessed" (*nympholeptos*, 238d1), only here in Plato, see Glossary under *Divine possession*. "I'm not far from speaking in dithyrambs" (238d3; cf. 241e2) also links Socrates with Dionysos, dithyrambic song being connected originally with that god.

50 For the first time in the *Phaedrus*, the beloved appears in the singular; see note 18. In this speech, a lover is interested in his "immediate pleasure" (239a) and depriving the beloved of "things most divine."

239a anything that is equal or stronger is hateful. So a lover will not willingly put up with a boyfriend who is stronger or even on equal terms with himself, but he will make him weaker and more needy, always. So, the ignorant are weaker than the wise, the cowardly are weaker than the manly, those incapable of speech-making are weaker than rhetoricians, and the slow are weaker than the quick-witted.

Necessarily, then, either a lover is deprived of his immediate pleasures, or he enjoys and tries to instill evils such as these, whether they are cultivated or innate—and evils still worse than these—which harm

b the boy's mind. A lover can't restrain his jealousy, or his impulse to prevent the boy from attending all sorts of occasions, especially the beneficial ones, where he may best grow into a man. This is cause enough for harm, but the greatest harm occurs when the lover prevents the boy from attending an occasion where he might best refine his thinking. That is the divine love of wisdom, and a lover must necessarily keep his boyfriend far from it, terrified to his marrow that the boy will grow to despise him. And so, a lover schemes to keep the boy totally ignorant and totally fixed on him, the boy being the sort who, in offering the greatest possible pleasure to the lover, would bring the greatest

c possible harm upon himself. Therefore, in no way is it useful for the mind to have as its guardian or companion a man who is in love.

Next one must consider the outward appearance of the boy's body and its care: both what sort of shape the body is in and how the master of that body will care for it, keeping in mind that the master is compelled to pursue pleasure rather than goodness. No doubt, the lover will be seen pursuing a boy who is soft and not vigorous, one who has not been raised in pure sunlight but under mottled shade, who is not accustomed to manly labors and honest sweat but to soft and un-

d manly living, who decks himself out in fancy hues and cosmetics for want of natural color, and who attends to all the other sorts of things which follow along with these ways, things that are obvious to all and unnecessary to outline further. But before going on, we can bring this point to a head: it's the kind of body that in battle and in other moments of great crisis inspires courage in the enemy but fills friends and the lovers themselves with fear.

Since this is now clear, we must go on and discuss what follows

e upon it: whether in our eyes a lover's guardianship and companionship confer good or ill in the matter of property. This much is clear to all, but especially to the lover, that before all else he would pray for the beloved to be orphaned of his dearest and kindliest possessions, those most divine. He would approve that the beloved be deprived of

240a father, mother, relatives, and friends, on the assumption that they hinder and censor his own most pleasurable company with the boy. He further believes that a boy in possession of gold or some other property is

not as easy to win over, nor, once won, as easy to manage. Accordingly, a lover must certainly be jealous of a boyfriend with property and rejoice if the property is destroyed. And, moreover, the lover would pray for his boyfriend to remain wifeless, childless, and homeless for as long as possible, desiring to enjoy the fruits of the boy's sweetness for as long as possible.

There are other evils too, no doubt, but some divine spirit mixed in a moment's pleasure with most of them. For example, a flatterer is a b
clever beast and a source of great harm, but nature has thrown into the mix a certain pleasure, and one not altogether boorish. Or someone might call a courtesan harmful, and there are many other creatures and practices of this sort, who moment by moment can be very pleasurable. But a lover, in addition to being harmful to his boyfriend, is also just about the most unpleasant creature to spend the day with. As the saying goes: "the young delight in the young." This is so, I suspect, because those of like age are attracted to similar pleasures and form friendships from similar experiences—but still even such fellowship reaches a saturation point. Add to this, there is also that compulsion which is always difficult for anyone to put up with but it is especially trying (as if the age difference weren't enough) when a lover forces himself on the beloved. Day and night the older man hangs around with the youth and is never willing to go away, but is driven on by a d
compulsion and a sting which bring him pleasure and drive him on whenever he sees, hears, touches, or senses the beloved, so that he waits happily on the beloved, hand and foot.

But what about the beloved? What encouragement or pleasures will the sting arouse in him so that he does not become exasperated spending all that time with a lover who is aging and has lost the bloom of youth? There are all sorts of other experiences that are not pleasant e
even to hear about, not to mention that they are far more difficult to cope with when you are staring in the face of compulsion: for example, being watched suspiciously at all times and in every circumstance, and listening to inappropriate and overblown praises. In the same way, reproaches which are unbearable when the lover is sober become shameful as well when he is drunk and gives way to excessive and unchecked language.[51]

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51 Excessive "language" translates *parresia*, a word which is clearly being used in a pejorative sense here, but which the Athenians often used in a positive sense to refer to the democracy's "freedom of speech or frankness." See Plato's *Republic* 557b; Isocrates 8.14; Euripides' *Hippolytus* 422. Socrates' use of the word here has unmistakable political overtones.

And more: the lover, when in love, is harmful and unpleasant, but when he has ceased loving he is untrustworthy from that moment forward. With endless oaths and entreaties and promising all sorts of
241a things, he was just barely able to sustain the fellowship then, painful as it was, by hope of good things to come. But when he stops loving and has to pay up, he adopts a different principle for himself and a new champion, mind and moderation replacing love and madness, while it has totally escaped the boy's notice that the lover has become a different person. The boy, however, demands return for past favors, remembering what has been said and done before, as if he were talking with the same person. But the lover feels shame and has little cour-
b age to say that he is now a different person or that he cannot honor the promises and oaths of his former mindless regime, now that he is a mindful and moderate person. Because he fears he'd revert to his former self if he were to do the same things as he did before. So by necessity the former lover defaults and flees from his promises and in a flip-flop, as if "heads" had become "tails,"[52] takes to his heels.

Having completely failed to realize from the start that he should never have yielded to a lover and to one who is perforce mindless, the boy calls upon the gods in his anger and feels compelled to pursue.
c Far better it would have been for the boy to submit to a non-lover and a mindful person. Otherwise, it would be necessary for him to surrender to a person who is by nature untrustworthy, fretful, jealous, unpleasant, harmful to his property, harmful to his body, and especially harmful to the education of his soul, than which surely nothing is or ever will be more esteemed, whether by humankind or the gods.

So, keep these things in mind, my darling boy, and understand that a lover's friendship does not stem from kindness but from a kind of
d hunger and desire for satiety: as wolves adore[53] lambs, so lovers are fond of a boy.

That's it, Phaedrus. You'll hear no more from me, but let this speech find its end here.

Phaedrus: And yet I thought you were half way through, and about to give equal time to the non-lover, describing how it is better to grant favors

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52 Socrates here alludes to a game where a sherd is tossed into the air, compelling one party to flee, the other to pursue, depending upon which side is up.

53 Socrates may be echoing a proverb or drawing from a passage in Homer's *Iliad* 22.262-63: "trusted oaths don't exist between men and lions; nor do wolves and lambs have like minds." This sentence contains the three words for love: *agapao* (adores), *phileo* (am fond of), *erastai*, lovers, from *eraomai*, the word for sexual love used most in the *Phaedrus*. See Glossary under *To Love*.

to him and outlining his good points. But, as it is, why are you stopping, Socrates?

Socrates: Didn't you realize, my blessed fellow, that I am no longer speaking in dithyrambic verse but epic hexameter, even though I am blaming the lover? If I begin to praise the non-lover, what verse form do you think I'll produce?[54] Don't you see that I shall obviously be possessed by these Nymphs whom you deliberately thrust in front of me?[55] Therefore, in a word, I say that whatever we've already said in reproach of the one, the opposite holds true of the other—all good things. Why make a long speech of it? About both, enough said. So my fable will experience whatever fate it deserves, and I think I'll make my way across this river and depart before you force me[56] to say anything more. e 242a

Phaedrus: Fine, but not yet, Socrates, at least not before the burning heat of the day passes. Don't you see it's almost exactly noontime when the sun stands still, as they say? Let's wait and continue our discussion, and leave soon when it cools down.

Socrates: You're truly divine when it comes to speeches, Phaedrus, simply astonishing. Of all the speeches that have been made during your lifetime, I'd say no one has produced more of them than you,[57] whether you were the one speaking, or in one way or another you forced others to speak. Your only rival is Simmias of Thebes; and now once again you seem the agent for another speech. b

Phaedrus: What good news. But how is that? In what way?

Socrates: Just as I was about to cross the river, my good man, that daimonic spirit and its customary sign came to me; it always restrains me when I'm about to do something wrong. And I thought I heard some voice all of a sudden which would not allow me to go away before I purified myself, as though I had committed some offence or other against c

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54 Dithyrambic verse is lyric, sung by choruses; epic is dactylic hexameter, a meter which Socrates approximates in the last line of his speech.

55 Socrates says that he shall have gods within (the future of *enthousiazo*, 241e, from which verb we get the word "enthused"), but he will realize soon enough that the speech he just gave was a "fault against the divine" (242c). The verb *enthousiazo*, however, continues to be used in Socrates' second speech to describe those enthused with a god (of erotic madness) within. For the instances of *enthousiazo* in the *Phaedrus*, see 241e (here), 249d, 249e, 253a, 263d; also see the adjectival form *entheos* modifying *philos* (255b; cf. 244b). Related to the question of having a god within, is the view that certain speeches are "possessed with soul," *empsukhos*, and others are not.

56 Compare 240c.

57 In the *Symposium*, Phaedrus is called "the father of the discussion" (177d), as the idea of the contest of speeches was his. Also see 270b-d, and esp. 278a-b.

the divine. I am really, then, a prophet, although not an entirely serious one, but just like people who are poor readers, I'm good enough for my own purposes. Clearly I am already learning what my offense is. As you know, my friend, the soul also is prophetic in a way, for she was causing me some trouble even before as I was delivering my speech and I felt shame somehow, lest, in the words of the poet Ibycus,

d "bringing harm upon the gods, I win honor among men."

And now, I have realized my offense.[58]

Phaedrus: And what is that?

Socrates: It was a terribly clever speech, Phaedrus, a terribly clever speech which you carried with you, and also the one you forced me to speak.

Phaedrus: In what way?

Socrates: The speech was simple-minded, even slightly irreverent; what could be more terrible than that?

Phaedrus: Nothing, if you speak the truth.

Socrates: What else? Don't you believe that Eros is a god, the son of Aphrodite?

Phaedrus: So it is said, to be sure.

Socrates: But not so for Lysias, at any rate, nor for your speech, which was

e delivered through my mouth while I was drugged and under your spell. But if Eros exists, as in fact he does, whether as a god or at least as something divine, he could not be bad in any way, although both speeches spoke just now as if he were. So in this way they erred about Eros, and on top of that both were simple-minded although very re-

243a fined, saying nothing salutary or true but putting on airs as if they were,

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58 This passage has caused translators considerable difficulty, in part because Socrates at first seems so indefinite about the nature of his offense or even if he has committed an offense and in part because Socrates appears to repeat himself after Ibycus' verse when he says (again) that he has learnt his offense. If we pay close attention to the verb tenses, both problems seem to clear up. In the first instance (242c6), the verb is in the present tense and could be translated "I am learning." Most translators take the word "clearly" in this sentence to mean: "Now, I clearly understand," but the position of the adverb suggests rather "Clearly now, I understand" or "I am learning." The second verb (242d2) is in the perfect, signifying a completed action which still bears upon the present, and is translated here "And now, I have realized." Socrates moves from uncertainty to understanding *after* he recalls Ibycus' verse, yet another instance in the dialogue when poetry shows Socrates the way. Socrates was unique in believing that he had a private divine spirit who appeared only to him, usually in the form of a voice, when he was about to commit an offense against the gods.

trying to deceive a few little human folks and win their praise. Therefore, my friend, I need to be cleansed. Long ago there was a cleansing rite for those who erred when telling fables, one not known to Homer but familiar to Stesichorus. Made blind because he slandered Helen's name, he, unlike Homer, did not fail to understand the reason why. Inspired by the Muses, he recognized the cause and immediately composed the following:

> This account (*logos*) is not genuine[59]—
> nor did you set sail on the well-benched ships,
> nor did you reach Troy's high citadel. b

And once he composed this so-called Palinode, he immediately regained his sight. So I shall be wiser than both of them in just this one regard. Before I suffer at all on account of my slander of Eros, I shall try to make amends with a palinode, keeping my head bare this time and not covered as before in shame.

Phaedrus: There could be no words sweeter to my ears than these, Socrates.

Socrates: In fact, my good Phaedrus, you too recognize how shameless those c
speeches were, both the one from the book and the next one. If someone of noble and gentle character happened to hear us saying that lovers get very irate over trivial matters and that they feel jealousy and ill-will toward their boyfriend, and if this someone was either in love with a character like himself or had once been loved, how could you think that he would not believe that he was listening to people who had been raised among sailors and had never seen a noble form of love among the free? And he would be far from agreeing with our censure d
of Eros.

Phaedrus: Most likely, by Zeus, Socrates.

Socrates: Accordingly, I am ashamed before this man, and in fear of Eros himself. I wish to wash away such bitter and brackish speech with sweet, fresh words, and I advise Lysias as well to write with haste that one must grant favors to a lover rather than a non-lover, everything else being equal.

Phaedrus: Rest assured that this will be done: once you have offered your

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59 The Greek for "genuine" is *etymos*, a word found commonly in Homer but found only three times in all of Plato's writing, all by Socrates in this dialogue (and always in the context of Doric speakers). In all three instances it appears to correct popular opinion: the first at 243a8 when Socrates quotes Stesichorus against Homer's view that Helen went to Troy; the second at 244a3 when Socrates repeats Stesichorus' verse to record his own correction of Lysias' comments about love; the third at 260e5 when a Spartan criticizes the view that rhetoricians only need to concern themselves with public opinion. See note 104.

e praise of the lover, I shall insist that Lysias write again on the same theme.[60]

Socrates: I believe you, so long as you are the man you are.

Phaedrus: Take courage, then, and speak.

Socrates: Where's the boy with whom I was just speaking? He must hear this speech, too, and not be in a rush to grant favors to the non-lover before he has heard me out.

Phaedrus: That boy's right here, always right by your side whenever you want him.[61]

244a **Socrates**: You need to understand, my beautiful darling boy, that the former speech belonged to Phaedrus, the son of Puthokles, from the deme of Murrhinous in Athens, but what I'm about to say belongs to Stesichorus, the son of Euphemos, from Himera.[62] It must go like this: it is not a "genuine account" if it claims that one ought to grant favors to a non-lover rather than to a lover who is near at hand, just because one is of sound mind, and the other is mad.

If madness were simply bad, all would be fine. But as it is, the greatest of all good things come to us through madness, provided that the madness is divinely given. First, the prophetess at Delphi and priest-
b esses at Dodona do many good things for Greece, in private and public matters, when they are mad, but when they are of sound mind and self-controlled they do next to nothing for our country. If we were to add the Sibyl and all the others who while possessed foretell many things to many people and guide them toward the future on a straight path, we would become tedious, detailing the obvious. Yet, it is also worthwhile to call upon the ancients as witnesses: as their names for things show, they did not think that madness was a cause for shame
c or blame. Otherwise, they would not have interwoven the word for madness, *mania*, into *manike*, the word for that most ennobling art, the art of expounding the future.[63] But recognizing that *mania* is beautiful when mixed with a divine portion, they called prophecy "manic,"

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60 Phaedrus' thoughts are still primarily on rhetoric.

61 Friedlander argues that Socrates "unmistakenly addressed (this speech) to Phaedrus himself" in what Socrates understood to be a war between sophistic and philosophical rhetoric. Others believe that the erotic banter here is merely playful.

62 Stesichorus is a real person from Himera, although his name ("Chorus-Master") and that of his father ("Good at Speech") may be *noms de plume*. It is one of those beautiful gifts of language that he is from Himera ("Land of Desire"), a word Socrates makes much of later in the palinode. See 251bc and note 78.

63 See Glossary under *Art*. "Most ennobling" translates the word *kalliste*, a superlative form of *kalos*, "beautiful" or "noble."

whereas people today tastelessly add a "t" and call prophecy the "mantic" art. In the same vein when the search into the future involved level-headed men consulting birds and other signs, the ancients called this an "*oionoistic*" art in the belief that from discursive thinking (*dianoia*) it uses mind (*nous*) and inquiry (*historia*) with human intelligence (*oiesis*), but nowadays the young, solemnly making the "o" long, **d**
call the art "oionistic."[64] Just as the "mantic" art is more perfect and honored than the "oionistic" art, both in name and activity, so also madness itself, as the ancients testify, is more ennobling than moderation, the one coming from a god, the other from man.

Secondly, in certain families which have been afflicted with the severest diseases and toils from some sort of ancient blood-guilt, madness crops up and prophesies for those in need, finding deliverance. **e**
By taking refuge in prayers and service to the gods, madness in conjunction with purifications and secret rites takes him out of harm's way, both for the short term and in the long haul, helping a person who is mad and possessed in the right way, to find a release from present ills. **245a**

A third form of madness and possession comes from the Muses. This madness takes hold of a tender soul, one pure like a pathless mountain peak;[65] it arouses and fills that soul with a Dionysiac frenzy to make lyric songs and other forms of poetry, the madness arranging and preserving the countless deeds of the ancients for the edification of generations to come. Whoever comes to the doors of poetry without the madness of the Muses, confident that he will become an accomplished poet by skill or art alone, this person and his poetry will fall short of his aim; the poetry of those who are mad will obliterate the poetry of a sound and self-controlled mind.

Such are the beautiful works—and there are more I could tell you **b**
about—all products of a god-inspired madness. So, let's not fear madness itself, nor let us be confused by any argument which tries to frighten us into believing that a man of sound mind should be chosen as friend over someone who has been stirred. Rather let that argument carry the day only after it has been shown that the gods do not send *eros* to a lover and the beloved for their benefit. For our part we must

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64 Making the second "o" long switches the etymology from "understanding" (*no*) with a short "o" to "bird" (*oionos*). Socrates' etymology is, needless to say, fanciful.

65 "One pure like a pathless mountain peak" translates *abatos* (245a2), a poetic word rarely found in Plato which means "pathless or untrodden," often describing mountain ridges where gods and shepherds roam. Others translate "virgin." Socrates' argument of poetry's benefits for humankind clashes with his views in the *Republic* (387b, 607a), but it should be noted that the virtues of inspired poetry are made here in passing and that poets have a lowly position (sixth out of nine) at 248e.

c show the opposite—namely that the gods grant such madness for our greatest good fortune. Clever people surely will scoff at this demonstration, but not the wise.

"On the nature of the soul," both in its human and divine forms, it is necessary first of all to consider the truth about what the soul experiences and what her activities are. The demonstration begins as follows.

Every soul is immortal. For the always moving is immortal. And what moves something else and is moved by something else stops living when it stops moving. Only that which moves itself never stops moving, in so far as it never leaves itself, but it is the fount and origin
d of motion even for other things, however many as are moved. And the origin is ungenerated. For it is necessary that everything which is born come from an origin but the origin does not come from something. If the origin should come from something, it would no longer be the origin. But since the origin is ungenerated, it is also necessarily imperishable. For if the origin is destroyed, neither will it ever be born from something, nor will anything come from it, if it is necessary that all things come from the origin. So, the origin of motion moves itself. It is not possible that it be destroyed or brought into being, or else all of
e the universe and all that is brought to life[66] would collapse and stand still and never again have the origin from which things find motion. If that which moves itself is called immortal, no one will be ashamed to say that the very essence and account of the soul consists in this. For every body which is moved by an outside source is soulless, but every body which is moved from within by itself is "ensouled," as this is the nature of soul. If it exists in this way, namely that this thing which
246a moves itself is nothing other than soul, then it would have to be that the soul is both immortal and ungenerated.[67]

Concerning the soul's immortality, then, this is sufficient, but we still need to discuss her form. It would take a god and a long time to examine in every detail what kind of thing the form is,[68] but human beings in a shorter amount of time can describe what she is like. So, let's take this route. Let us liken the soul to the innate power of a winged team of horses and a charioteer. All of the gods' horses and
b charioteers are themselves good and from good stock, but the situation

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66 A variant reads: "all the heaven and all the earth collapses into one."

67 The style here imitates the language of pre-Socratic, natural philosophers like Parmenides, Herakleitos, Empedocles, and especially Alcmaeon from Croton. Reference to the soul as self-moving links this section with what Socrates says later about love re-installing motion into a wingless soul within a mortal body.

68 It is equally possible to translate: "to examine in every detail what kind of thing the soul is."

of other horses and charioteers is mixed. For us men, first of all, a charioteer rules over and guides a *pair* of horses, and secondly, one of these horses is noble and good and from like stock, but the other is the opposite and from opposite stock. So, for us chariot-driving must be difficult and irksome.

And next, I should try to explain why living creatures are called both mortal and immortal. Every soul takes care of everything which is soulless and she traverses the entire heaven, changing from one form to another. When she is perfect and winged, a soul roams among the stars and governs the cosmos at large. But when she has lost her feathers, a soul is carried along until she lays hold of something solid where she settles in and acquires an earthly body. Because of the power it gains from the soul, this body appears to move itself and is called in sum a living creature, soul and body having been joined. And it is called "mortal." But the term immortal is not derived from any reasoned account. Although we can neither see nor conceive of a god sufficiently, we fashion[69] him nonetheless as an immortal creature of some sort with a body and a soul, the two joined together for eternity. But allow these things, and our discussion of them, to stand in whatever way it pleases the gods.

And let us consider why the feathers fall off a soul and drop away. The explanation is something like this. By its nature the wing's natural capacity is to convey what is weighty upward and to roam among the stars where the race of the gods dwell; and, most of all bodily parts, it has a share in the divine—the divine which is beautiful, wise, good, and everything of this sort. The soul's feathers are especially nourished and increased by these, but diminished and utterly destroyed by shame, vice, and such opposites. So, then, the great leader in heaven, Zeus, takes the lead, driving a winged team, arranging everything thoroughly and taking care of it. An army of gods and daemons follow him, arranged in eleven contingents, because Hestia, goddess of the Hearth, remains alone in the house of the gods. The rest are arranged in a group of twelve, taking their station according to their assigned rank.[70]

Within heaven there are many blessed vistas as well as beautiful pathways which the race of the happy gods traverses, each of the gods

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69 In the phrase, "we fashion" (*plattomen*), Plato appears to be punning on his name, as may also be true in regard to the plane tree (*platanos*, 230b3) where the dialogue takes place.

70 It is not clear in the Greek whether Hestia is among the twelve, or (more probably) a thirteenth god. In Plato's time, the canon of twelve Olympians was not fixed. If Socrates includes Hestia among the twelve, the others would be Zeus, Hera, Demeter, Poseidon, Aphrodite, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Hephaistos, Ares, and Hermes; if not, then Dionysos or Hades would make the twelfth. No mortal souls chose Hestia as their god.

attending to his own business.[71] Whoever is willing and able can follow behind, since Envy stands outside the space of the divine dance. But when the gods go to the feast and banquet, they make the steep
b climb to the arch of heaven's vault, a journey which the gods' chariots make with ease as they are well-balanced and obedient to the rein. But other chariots can barely follow. The vicious horse is heavy and to the extent that it was not trained well it sinks earthward and weighs the charioteer down. At this point, the soul experiences extreme toil and struggle. But when those souls which we call immortal[72] reach the
c summit of heaven, they go to the edge and stand on the rim; there, the revolving motion carries them around as they stand and gaze on things outside the heavens [i.e., a vision of the Forms].

None of the poets here on earth have ever sung the praises of this place beyond heaven, nor will any ever sing of it adequately. But the hymn goes like this—for we must have the courage to speak the truth, especially when the true nature of things is our subject. This is the place of Being, the Being that truly is—colorless, shapeless, and untouchable, visible to the mind alone, the soul's pilot, and the source of true knowl-
d edge. Just as a god's discursive thinking is nourished by the mind and unmixed knowledge, so is the thought of every soul nourished by what is appropriate for her to receive. When much time has passed and she looks upon Being, she feels adoration,[73] and when contemplating the truth, she is easily nourished and feels joyous, until the revolving motion carries her around in full circle to the originating point. In this circuit, the soul looks upon Justice itself, and she looks upon Moderation, and she looks upon Knowledge, but not the knowledge where Becoming resides, nor the knowledge which changes from object to
e object regarding things which down here we call Being. Rather, it is the knowledge of the Being which really is. And once she has similarly looked upon and banqueted on other things which really are, she re-enters heaven, returning home. When she arrives, the charioteer takes the horses to the manger, providing nectar for feed and ambrosia for drink.

248a Such is the life of the gods. But of the other souls, one follows a god very well and patterns herself after him, raising up the head of her charioteer to peer upon the place outside heaven, and she is carried around with the gods in the revolving motion, but even so, this

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71 In the *Republic*, everyone tending to his own business is the definition of justice for those who live in the city of speech.

72 A difficult phrase as every soul is immortal. Perhaps Socrates means that the souls of the gods are immortal in body as well as "in soul."

73 "Feels adoration" translates *agapa* (247d3); see Glossary under *To Love* and note 53.

soul gets confused by the horses and is scarcely able to gaze upon the things that are. Another soul, harassed by the horses, rises and falls, seeing some things and not seeing others. But all of the remaining souls seek the upward path and are eager to follow but they lack the means and are carried around below the surface, trampling each other and getting smashed about, each one trying to get in front of the other. b
Confusion and rivalry and great quantities of sweat are the result, some souls being maimed because of the charioteers' wrongdoing,[74] while other souls have their wings shattered. In spite of this great effort, all souls, everyone of them, leave the sight of Being, unfulfilled,[75] and, once departed, feed on the food of conjecture.

The reason for this great haste to see the Plain of Truth and find its whereabouts is that the pasturelands there happen to be just right c
for the best part of the soul, and that the wing which makes it possible for the soul to become airborne is nourished thereby.

Now, the law of Compulsion. If any soul is in the company of a god and perceives something of the truth, she is free from pain until the next cycle begins; if she is always able to do this, she will always be safe. But whenever a soul cannot see the truth and is thus unable to follow the path, and by some misfortune gets weighed down burdened by forgetfulness and wrongdoing, and in her heaviness sheds her feathers and falls to earth, then the following law applies. In the d
first generation of a soul's fall to earth, she can never be planted into a brute animal, but the soul which has witnessed Being the most in heaven shall be planted into the seed of someone who will become a lover of wisdom, or a lover of beauty, or of something musical and erotic. The second best soul shall be planted into the seed of a future law-abiding king or a military man, or a ruler; the third best, into the seed of a political man, or an estate manager, or a money-maker; the fourth best, into the seed of one who loves toil, or a gymnast, or a doctor; the fifth best, into the seed of a prophet or seer or priest of mystic e
rites. In the sixth best soul a poet resides, or someone concerned with imitation; in the seventh, a craftsman or farmer; in the eighth, a sophist or demagogue; in the ninth, a tyrant. In all these men, the one who lives justly has a better portion; the one who lives unjustly, a worse portion.

It takes each soul 10,000 years to return to the same spot whence she started—for the wings don't grow back before then—unless it is 249a

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74 "Wrongdoing" translates *kakia;* it could also be translated "cowardice" or "wickedness."

75 "Unfulfilled" (*ateleis*) could also be translated "uninitiated." Some find this account intentionally humorous or absurd.

the soul of a person who loves wisdom without deceit, or loves a boy at the same time as he loves wisdom. If in the third 1,000 year circuit these souls choose the same life three times in succession, they sprout wings in the 3,000th year and depart. But the rest are judged after their first life is completed; and, once judged, they either go to a house of correction under the earth where they pay their penalty, or, made airborne by Justice, they go to a place in the heavens and live a life wor-
b thy of the one they lived in their human form. In the 1,000th year both types of souls arrive at a place of allotments where they choose their second life according to their wishes. At that time two things may occur: a human soul could move into an animal life, or a soul, formerly human but now animal, could move back to a human. This is because only a soul which has seen the truth can enter into our human form: for a human being must understand what is said in reference to form,
c that which, going from a plurality of perceptions is drawn together by reasoning into a single essence. This process occurs by recollecting those things which our soul once saw when traveling in the company of a god, looking with contempt at those things which we now say exist, and lifting up its head to see what really is. As is just, only the discursive thinking of a philosopher, the one who is in love with wisdom, grows wings. For thought is always, according to her capability through memory, near to those things, and by this nearness a god is divine. And only a man who correctly handles such reminders and is perpetually initiated into these perfect mysteries is truly perfect. But
d standing apart from zealous human pursuits and being near to the divine, he is admonished by the many for being deranged, because they fail to see that he is divinely possessed, having the god within.

Certainly, then, everything about our fourth madness is here: when someone looks upon earthly beauty and is reminded of the true beauty, he acquires wings; and when he tries those wings, eager but unable to take flight—like a bird looking upward—and he shows no concern for things below, there are reasons to think him touched with madness.
e Both for the person who has this madness and for the one who shares in it, this is the very best of all the divine possessions, and it comes from the best sources; and the lover hit with this madness is called a lover of beautiful people and beautiful things. And, as we have said, by our very nature every human soul has already viewed the things
250a which are; or else she wouldn't have come into this life form.

But it is not easy for every soul from her earthly perspective to recall those distant things, especially for those souls which saw them briefly or had bad luck when falling here, so that when they were turned toward injustice by some company or other here they naturally forgot the sacred things they had seen there. To be sure, few souls are left for whom that memory is sufficient. Whenever they behold an im-

age of the things there, they are thoroughly startled and they are no longer themselves and they do not recognize the sensation that they are having because they cannot perceive it sufficiently. There is no shine in the images here on earth of justice and moderation and the other things honorable for souls, but through the dim organs of the senses a few people, and they with difficulty, approach these images and behold the original of the thing imaged. Formerly, however, it was possible to look upon beauty in its radiance when in a blessed chorus- dance we in Zeus' entourage, and others in the company of other gods, witnessed a blest sight and spectacle and we were initiated into what it is lawful to call the most blest of the mysteries. Celebrating these inspired rites, we were whole and untouched by those evils which lay in wait for us later. Being fully initiated and looking upon whole, simple, unchanging, and blessed visions[76] in pure light, we were ourselves pure and unmarked by what we now carry around and call a body, a thing which imprisons us like an oyster shell. b c

Let this tribute to memory be agreeable, a tribute which we have lingered over for some time in our longing for things past. But now, as we were saying, beauty shone brightly in the midst of those visions. And when we came here, we grasped it shining most clearly through the clearest of our senses, because sight is the sharpest of our physical senses. But thought is not seen by it—oh, what awe-inspiring loves sight would provide if it could provide just as clear an image, as beauty does, of thought itself or of other lovely forms. But, as it is, beauty alone has this distinction to be naturally the most clearly visible and the most lovely. d e

Thus, the person who has been corrupted or who is not a recent initiate is not conveyed quickly to beauty itself, that is, he is not carried from here to there quickly. When looking at beauty's namesake here, such a person fails to experience true reverence as he gazes but yields to pleasure and tries to mount and to spawn children according to the law of a four-footed animal. In company with wantonness, he shows no fear or shame as he pursues unnatural pleasure. But the recent initiate, someone who has amply observed things from that past realm, at first shudders and feels something of those old terrors come over him when he sees a god-like face or any part of the body which is a good imitation of beauty. Later, looking more, he feels reverence as if he were 251a

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76 "Visions" translates *phasmata*, an extremely rare word in Plato and only here in the *Phaedrus*. Socrates uses the language of initiation to describe "sight" of the Forms themselves, although, by definition, they belong to the invisible realm of Being and not to the physical realm of Becoming. Forms cannot be perceived with the senses, nor can divine beauty be seen with the eyes, but only a copy or likeness (*eidolon*) of it in the figure of a beautiful body or person. See Glossary under *Form(s)*.

before a god and, if he were not afraid to appear excessively mad, he would sacrifice to his darling boy as if to a statue and a god. As is
b natural after his cold shudder, a change, accompanied by sweat and unaccustomed fever, comes over him as he looks. At the same time, he is warmed as he receives the in-flowing of beauty through the eyes. From the in-flowing, the natural power of the wing is watered and with this warmth the scabbing around the projection which sometime before had hardened and closed up, preventing blooming, begins to melt away. With the in-flowing nourishment the wing's stalk under the surface of the soul begins to swell and to feel the urge to grow from its roots. At one time, you know, the entire soul was winged.[77] In this state
c the whole soul boils and throbs violently—not unlike the itching and aching irritation around the gums that a child feels when he begins to teethe. That's the same sensation which the soul feels when her wings begin to sprout: she boils, aches, and itches. So, whenever a soul looks at a boy's beauty she is watered and warmed from this as she takes in these in-flowing and invading draughts of beauty—that's why it's
d called "desire."[78] This causes both a relief from pain and a feeling of joy.

But when the soul is separated and feels dry, the openings of the passageways through which the feathers have pushed are closed and

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77 It is very probable that "winged" is slang for the erect phallus, a point made even more strongly at 252b. In the prior sentence, "stalk" translates *kaulos*, a word only used here in Plato's *oeuvre*. It refers principally to the stalk of a plant and here is frequently translated as "quill"; the word is also widely used to refer to the duct of a penis, a woman's cervix, or the penis itself. With other words in this passage referring to growth, swelling, and pulsing, it appears as if the double entendre is fully intended. The philosophic soul's eroticism is contrasted with the corrupt soul's "unnatural" desire to beget children. Unlike the aroused penis of a corrupt soul which can find a physical object to relieve its desire, the aroused state of the philosophic soul can only be relieved by a "recollection" or "memory" of the eternal Forms. In the *Republic* 490b5, a lover is said to "couple with" (*migeis*) the Forms, the union begetting intelligence and truth and a cessation from the labor (of childbearing) (*odines*, the first meaning of which is "the throes of childbirth").

78 The alliteration of "draughts" and "desire" attempts to capture Socrates' play on words when he offers an etymology: *himeros* ("desire") from *mere*, "parts or portions," and *rheonta*, "flowing." A more literal translation is as follows: the soul is warmed by "receiving portions (*mere*) which come and flow in (*epionta kai rheonta*) from there—which is why it is called desire (*himeros*)." For Stesichorus from Himera in whose voice Socrates delivers this speech, see 244a and note 62; and for Himeros as the name of the spring which Zeus associates with his love for Ganymede, see 255c, and note 86. Also 253a. For a different Platonic etymology of *himeros*, see the *Cratylus* 420a. At 249e, there seems to be a different etymological word play, deriving *erastes* ("lover") from *ho eron* ("the lover") and *aristos* ("the best").

dried up, shutting off the budding of the feather. When this has been shut off with desire locked in, the unborn feather throbs like pulsing arteries, each pricking at its passageway, so that the entire soul is actually stung all over, driven mad with anguish; but when she recalls the beautiful boy again, she feels joy.

When both sensations are intermixed, the soul is both greatly troubled by the oddity of the experience and raves, at a loss to understand it. Driven mad, she is neither able to sleep at night nor remain e
in one place by day, but, yearning she runs to whatever place she thinks she will see the boy who possesses beauty. When she has seen him and is bathed in the waters of desire, she loosens those places previously jammed tight and, free from the stings and birth pangs, she draws in a big breath, and once again reaps the fruits, for a moment, 252a
of this most sweet pleasure. She is not willing at all to be deprived of this pleasure, nor does she consider anything more valuable than this beautiful boy; but has already forgotten mothers, brothers, and all her companions. She thinks nothing of losing property through neglect and spurns all habits and refinements by which she beautified herself before, ready now to be a slave and to sleep wherever she is permitted so long as it is very near the object of her desire. In addition to revering the boy who possesses beauty, the soul finds in him the only doc- b
tor for her greatest labors and pains.

My beautiful darling boy, this passion which we have been discussing, human beings call love; but when you hear what the gods name it, you will laugh probably because of your youth. Some Homeric singers, I think, speak of two verses from an unpublished epic to Love, and one of them is utterly outrageous and not entirely metrical. But the song goes like this:

> Verily mortals call him winged Eros,
> but gods call him Winged, because he makes things rise.[79]

We may or may not trust these verses, but the characteristics and the c
experience of lovers are just like this.

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[79] The gods fuse noun and adjective, calling "winged Eros" (*eros potenos*) "Winged" (*Pteros*), *pteros* used only here and in its adjectival form at 251b7 in Plato. As already suggested in 251a-d, Socrates is probably drawing on a common portrait of the erect penis in Greek art as winged, what in English might be rendered a Winged Pecker or a Cock. For "He makes things rise" which translates *pterophytor' ananken* (literally: "wing-making compulsion"), I thank my student Collomia Charles. See further, William Arrowsmith, "Aristophanes' *Birds*: The Fantasy Politics of Eros," *Arion* n.s.1 (1973) 119-67, esp. Appendix II on the *Phaedrus*, pp. 164-67, an argument made stronger if *kaulos* is added to the discussion. No doubt, it is the gods' use of slang which causes the young to laugh.

If a man who has been seized by love was once among Zeus' entourage, he is able to bear the burden of winged compulsion with a good deal of dignity. But those who were in Ares' camp and traveled the circuit with him—if they are captured by Love and for any reason suspect that they've been wronged by their darling boy, they become
d homicidal and are ready to sacrifice themselves and the beloved. Each walks in the footsteps of the god he chooses, joining in that choral dance, living out his life in honor of that god, and imitating him to the best of his abilities for as long as he remains uncorrupted and is in his first incarnation here on earth. He behaves this way to all: both to those he loves[80] and to everyone else. Each person, then, chooses his Love from among the beautiful after his own tastes, and sculpts and
e fits that person out like a statue as if he were a god for him to honor and to worship with secret rites.

The followers of Zeus search for a beloved who is noble and Zeus-like in his soul, and they ask whether the beloved is by nature a lover of wisdom and a ruler. Whenever they find him, they fall in love and do everything they can to help him become such a person. But if lovers have not practiced this kind of service before, they now try their hand at it and learn from any source, finding their way on their own.
253a As they follow the scent and search within themselves to discover the nature of their god, they have an easy time of it because they are fiercely driven to gaze upon the god. And in this way when they make contact with a god through memory, they are possessed by him and pick up his habits and practices to the extent that humans can share in the divine. As they attribute the cause of these feelings to the beloved, they adore him even more dearly; and, if they draw their inspiration from Zeus, then like inspired Bacchants[81] following Dionysos they pump this
b inspiration into the beloved's soul and make him as similar as possible to their god.

Those who follow Hera, in turn, seek a beloved who is regal in nature, and if they find him they do all the same things for him. Followers of Apollo and each of the other gods, proceed in the manner of their god and search for a boyfriend whose nature resembles their god; when they acquire him they themselves imitate the god and persuade and discipline the darling, leading him into the service and ways of the god, according to each one's ability. They do so without envy or
c stingy ill-will toward the darling but in the hope that, trying as hard

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80 As mentioned in note 20, outside Lysias' speech this is the one place where "beloved" is in the plural.

81 Bacchants, filled with the god Dionysos (not Zeus), like lovers are possessed by a divine frenzy. There is a contagion about this frenzy to which all in the god's company are susceptible. See notes 29 and 49.

as they can, they may lead the loved one wholly and entirely to resemble both themselves and the god whom they honor. The eagerness of those truly in love and the initiation rite, if lovers obtain what they are eager for in the way I have outlined, become both beautiful and blessed. It is a blessedness which derives from the love-crazed friend but also benefits the boy who is befriended, provided, that is, the boy is captured. And this is how to conquer the one who is captured.

Just as at the beginning of our fable we divided each soul into thirds—two parts, horse forms of some sort; the third, the form of a charioteer[82]—let's continue to use them even now for our story. One of **d**
the horses, we said, was good, the other not, but we haven't discussed the excellence of the good one or the vice of the vicious one. We should do that now. Well, of the two, one stands in the position of greater beauty (i.e., on the right), in form erect and well-jointed, high-necked, hooked nose, white to behold, black-eyed, a lover of honor with a sense of moderation and shame and a companion of true opinion, without need of the whip, ruled by command and word alone. But the other is **e**
crooked, bulky, poorly slung together, stiff-necked, thick-necked, snub-nosed, black-skinned, cloudy-eyed, hot-blooded, a companion of wantonness and insolences, shaggy about the ears, obtuse, and scarcely obedient to whip or goad.[83] Therefore, whenever the charioteer beholds the eyes of his beloved—the sensation having thoroughly warmed the whole soul—and he begins to feel a tickling and a desire for the goad, **254a**
the obedient horse, constrained as always by a sense of shame,[84] restrains itself from jumping upon the darling boy. But the other horse no longer minds the charioteer's goad or the whip as it bounds up and is carried along by force. It causes every kind of difficulty for its yoked partner and for the charioteer, forcing them to move toward the darling boy and to recall the delight of sex. At the beginning, the two re-

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82 "Form(s)" translates *eide* (plural), *eidos* (singular), the same word used for the invisible Forms of true Being. See Glossary under *Form(s)*.

83 Socrates' vocabulary to describe these two creatures ("horse forms of some sort") parallels but is unlike any other description of horses in Greek literature, as my student Collomia Charles has observed. Socrates' description falls into three categories: deportment, temperament, and beauty; it seems likely that they reflect traits of the human soul. "Of right opinion" could also be translated "of true and good reputation"; "stiff necked" more literally is "strong necked" (a sign of stubbornness in horses); "cloudy-eyed" more literally is "gray eyed" (but only horses with cataracts have gray eyes; but perhaps "blue-eyed" is meant, a sign of weak vision); "insolences" could also be translated "false pretenses"; "obtuse" is usually translated "deaf" (a translation made difficult by 254d-e), and here refers to a thick-skinned horse, unresponsive to the whip.

84 This could also mean "pressing hard in accord with a sense of shame."

b sist and are irritated, feeling forced to engage in terrible and unlawful acts, but finally when they find no end to this vice they follow along passively, both of them yielding and agreeing to do whatever is commanded.

They approach the boy and see the darling's face, flashing like a lightning bolt. With this sight the charioteer's memory is carried toward the essence of the beautiful, and once again he sees beauty itself standing alongside moderation on a holy pedestal. Overcome with fear and reverence by the sight, the charioteer's memory recoils on its back and
c is compelled simultaneously to pull back on the reins with such violence that both horses naturally sit on their haunches, one willingly because it does not resist, but the wanton one extremely unwilling. When both withdraw some distance from the boy, one from a sense of shame and astonishment bathes the entire soul with sweat; the other, having scarcely regained its breath and no longer feeling pain from the bit and the fall, starts in a fury to abuse and to curse the charioteer and its yoke-mate excessively for cowardice and lack of manliness for
d having abandoned their station and their agreement. Forcing them against their will to advance again, the black horse steps back, but barely, as they plead to put off the advance for a time. But when that agreed-upon time is up and the other two pretend to have forgotten, it reminds them both: forcing, snarling, dragging, it makes them approach the darling again to deliver the same words, and when they are near, it pulls forward, head down, tail straight back, biting on the bit, shame-
e less. Even more resentful than before, the charioteer falls back as if recoiling from a starting gate, still more violently yanking back on the bit in the wanton horse's mouth. Bloodying its abusive tongue and jaws, he presses the legs and haunches of the horse hard upon the ground in pain. Only when it has suffered this same treatment repeatedly does the despicable creature cease its wanton excess. Humbled, in the end it follows the charioteer's plan, and when it sees the beautiful boy it is devastated by fear. Then at last it actually happens that the lover's soul follows the darling with awe and a sense of shame.

255a Because the boy is now waited on in every possible way as if he were a god, and the lover is no longer pretending but truly feels his servitude, the boy is naturally friendly to the one who offers him such attention, even if earlier he thrust away from the lover, when he had been misled by his schoolmates and others who said that it was shameful to be near him. But with the passage of time, his age and necessity
b compel the boy to admit the lover into his company, as it has never been ordained by fate that vice be dear to vice or that good not be dear to good. When the boy admits him, accepting his conversation and

company (or intercourse),[85] the lover's kindness being near now astonishes the boy as he perceives how all his other friends and relatives put together do not offer a fraction of the friendship of his godly-inspired friend. When the lover continues over time to be kind and to remain by his side, even to the point of touching in the gymnasium and other places of companionship, a spring, from that flow which c
Zeus in love with Ganymede called Desire (*Himeros*),[86] gushes over the lover, part of its waters entering into him and part of it overflowing when he has become full. As a breeze or perhaps an echo bounces off a smooth hard surface and is carried back to the source from which it sprang, just so the flow of beauty goes back into the beautiful one through his eyes, arriving where it naturally goes into the soul, causing movement of the wing. There the stream waters the pathways of d
the feathers, urges them to sprout, and fills the beloved's soul in turn with love.

The boy is then in love, but he is at a loss to say with what. He doesn't know what he has experienced, nor is he able to explain it, but just as a person who has contracted an eye-disease from someone[87] is unable to name the alleged cause, so he does not realize that in his lover he is seeing himself as though in a mirror. When that man is near, his pain ceases, as it does for the man. But when the man is absent, the boy yearns and is yearned for, again in the same ways, as he expe-
riences a "return-love," an image or copy of love. He calls and consid- e
ers this to be friendship, not love. Like the man, only less intensely, he

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85 *Homilia* typically refers to social intercourse (as at 239e, 250a, and 255b) but it can also mean sexual intercourse, although there is no passage in Plato where it must be taken in this vein. Usage here (255b) and at 255b and 240a leaves room for ambiguity, perhaps deliberately. See *phileo* conveying outward (i.e. physical) signs of love at 255e and 256a (note 88). "No longer pretending" refers back to 237b.

86 The myth of Zeus and the mortal Ganymede parallels the theme of Socrates' speech: a descent from Olympus to seize an object of beauty to bring him up to Olympus; compare Boreas "blowing down" to "snatch up" Oreithuia (229c). For other references to Himera in this speech, see 251c and notes 63 and 78. By punning on Ganymede's name, Socrates links him to Phaedrus, whose name also means "bright"; see note 28. In submitting to a lover, the beloved gains friendship (cf. 240d) more than bodily pleasure, though that is not absent, as we can see from this passage.

87 Eye diseases, the Greeks believed, could be transmitted by looking into infected eyes.

desires to see, to touch, to kiss,[88] to lie down beside. And then, as is likely, soon afterwards he does these very things.

When the two lie together, the lover's unbridled horse has a word with the charioteer, feeling that it deserves for its many labors some
256a small return; but the darling's vicious horse can't speak a word. Full to bursting[89] and at a loss what to do, it throws itself all over the lover with kisses, and embraces him for being extremely kind. And when they do lie down together, this horse does not intend to hold back any part of himself to the lover if he should beg for sexual favors. The horse's yoke-mate and the charioteer, however, from a sense of shame and reason, resist.[90] So if the better parts of discursive thinking prevail, as they lead toward a regimented life and a love of wisdom, then all involved
b enjoy a blessed and harmonious life here on earth. Self-composed and master of themselves, they have enslaved what enables viciousness to enter the soul and they have liberated what allows excellence access.[91] When they die, now winged and buoyant they have won the first round of the three wrestling falls in these, the true Olympic Games.[92] There is no greater good than this that either mortal moderation or divine madness can provide a human being.

c But if they adopt a more coarse way of life, one that loves honor and not wisdom,[93] then perhaps when drunk or in some other careless hour the couple's two unbridled horses will catch their souls unguarded and lead them forward to the same thing, namely to seize upon and carry out a course of action which many consider most blissful. And when they have carried out this act once, they will continue to do so for the rest of their lives, though sparingly, since they do not approve

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88 Here (255e) and at 256a, the verb *phileo* conveys physical expressions of love, here translated "to kiss"; for the use of the verb in the *Phaedrus*, see notes 12 and 53. The "return-love" (*anteros*) of 255e1 may represent a radical departure from older man and "boy" sexual mores. According to this view, Sappho's love poetry presents a female eroticism of reciprocity and mutuality not found in Greek male same-sex relationships; cf. David Halperin, "Plato and Erotic Reciprocity," *Classical Antiquity* 5 (1986) 66-7. For arguments of comparable reciprocity between males, see the Introduction and Appendix C.

89 The word for "full to bursting" is *spargon* and is particularly associated with breasts swelling with milk.

90 The language echoes 253d6-e1 to a degree, where *logos* is translated as "word" rather than "reason;" in this dialogue on speech and word, it is only on rare occasions as here that *logos* is translated as "reason."

91 In Lysias' speech, by contrast, sexual pleasure was a reward for excellence (*arete*); see 232d. But in this speech, excellence depends upon enslaving sexual appetite.

92 See 249a. In Olympic wrestling-matches, the third throw brings victory.

93 In the *Republic*, love of honor is the first indicator that a soul is no longer harmoniously arranged; see (549aff).

of this with their full mind. When in love and later when out of love, these two also go through life as friends with each other, although not so close as the philosophic couple, believing that they have given to each other and have received the greatest pledges which it would be a crime to break and feel enmity. In death, their souls are wingless, and yet they are eager to sprout feathers as they leave their bodies, so that actually they have not carried off a small prize for their erotic madness. It is the law for those who have already begun their journey in lower heaven that they shall not return to the dark path under the earth, but shall lead a bright life in blessed journeys with each other, and from their love shall grow, in due time, common plumage. **d** **e**

My darling boy, a lover's friendship will bestow upon you these great and divine blessings. But a non-lover's intimacy is diluted by mortal moderation and pays meager mortal benefits. It begets in his friend's soul a slavish economizing which most people praise as a virtue but will cause your soul to roam for 9,000 years around the earth and beneath it, mindlessly. **257a**

This, my dear Eros, is the finest and most beautiful palinode within my powers. I offer it to you in atonement. If my phrasing and other things have been rather poetical, understand that Phaedrus has forced them upon me.[94] Pardon what went before and find favor in this; in your kind graciousness, don't take away that erotic art given me earlier, nor in anger maim me, but grant that these beautiful boys value my art still more in the future than now. If in the former speech Phaedrus and I said anything that shocked you, find fault with Lysias, father of the speech, and stop him from making such speeches; rather turn him toward a love of wisdom, just as his brother Polemarchos has already been turned. Do this so that his lover here, Phaedrus, may also stop going in two directions as now,[95] but devote his life solely to Love with wisdom-loving speeches. **b**

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94 This picks up a point Socrates made at 234c. We must understand irony in the claim that the poetic tones of this speech are for Phaedrus' sake. Nowhere else in Plato does Socrates describe such an esctatic vision, a place beyond heaven never before described by a *poietes*.

95 The God of Love, we see again, turns a lover and guides him towards philosophy. The point is particularly relevant to Phaedrus whom Socrates describes as "going in two directions" (*epamphoterize*, 257b), wavering as he is between Lysias and Socrates' speeches. In the *Republic*, the verb describes things which are multiples, both beautiful and ugly, big and small, etc. In Aristotle, it is a technical term to describe plants and animals (like apes, monkeys, baboons) which cross between categories. What Aristotle describes in botanical and zoological categories, Socrates in this dialogue describes in mythic terms, as in hybrid creatures like the Centaurs and Typhon who exhibit complex natures (cf. 229d-230a, and note 15).

Phaedrus: I join with you in that prayer, Socrates, if this will really be
c better for us. But for some time now I have been astonished by your speech,[96] considering how much more beautifully you turned this speech than the first one. It's actually made me anxious lest Lysias seem second-rate by comparison—if, that is, he even wanted to match your speech with one of his own. In fact, my astonishing man, one of those public figures in the city was recently haranguing him for this very thing, throughout his speech referring to him as a "speechwriter." So for love and honor, he might refriain from writing for us.

Socrates: That's ridiculous, young man, and you are far off the mark about
d your companion if you really believe that he's so easily frightened by noise like that. But perhaps you think that the man who was chastising Lysias meant what he said as a reproach.

Phaedrus: So it seemed, Socrates. And you too are aware, I suppose, that the most powerful and revered men in a city are ashamed to write speeches and to leave their written compositions for others to see, fearing that in the future they'll be labeled "sophists."

e **Socrates**: It's like the "Pleasant Bend"[97] in the Nile, Phaedrus. You also seemed to have forgotten that these self-regarding politicians especially love to write speeches and to leave their written compositions around. These are the writers who so adore people who approve of their writings that whenever they write a speech they actually begin by naming on each occasion those who approve of them.

Phaedrus: What in heaven's name do you mean? I don't understand.

258a **Socrates**: You don't understand that approvals are recorded up front at the beginning of a politician's text?

Phaedrus: How is that?

Socrates: "It was decreed by the Council," or "by the People," or by both; so he begins, I suppose. Or "so-and-so said"—in this last case the writer with great pomp and circumstance referring to himself. And then he proceeds to show off his own wisdom to those who approve, sometimes making an extraordinarily long text. Or does a written speech seem to differ from such writing somehow?

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96 When Socrates interrupts himself in his first speech, he told Phaedrus not to be astonished by what he was saying (238d2) and Phaedrus complied; but now he is astonished, even if his attention still seems to be on the competition with Lysias rather than the substance of Socrates' palinode.

97 Even for the generations after Plato, the meaning of "Pleasant Bend" was lost. Presumably, it refers to a bend in the river, lengthening the distance between two points. If so, the phrase means the opposite of what it says, the bend being anything but pleasant and Socrates uses the proverb to suggest that politicians love to write. Others take it as a term of endearment for Phaedrus.

Phaedrus: No, not at all. b

Socrates: Therefore, if this speech is approved, the maker of the speech leaves the theater[98] rejoicing; but if it is discarded and he is excluded from the business of speech writing, not being considered a worthy writer, then he grieves, and so do his friends.

Phaedrus: Very true.

Socrates: So it's clear—far from despising this practice, these people really admired it, and are actually astonished by it.

Phaedrus: Yes, absolutely right.

Socrates: Well then—when a man becomes so proficient an orator or a king that he naturally becomes an immortal speech-writer in his city with c the capacity of a Lykourgos or a Solon, or Darius,[99] doesn't he consider himself godlike when he's alive, and don't future generations believe the same things about him because of his writings?

Phaedrus: Very true.

Socrates: Do you think, then, that such a person—no matter who he is or how disaffected with Lysias he might be—would reproach that man for writing?

Phaedrus: It is not likely from what you are saying, for then he would be reproaching his own passions, it seems.

Socrates: Then this much is clear to all: writing speeches, at least, is not d in itself shameful.

Phaedrus: And why should it be?

Socrates: But this, I think, is shameful: not speaking or writing well, but doing it shamefully or badly.

Phaedrus: That's it, clearly.

Socrates: How, then, do you write well or poorly? Phaedrus, ought we to cross-examine Lysias about these things, and anyone else who has ever

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98 The verbal play in this passage causes translators great difficulty: (Hackforth) "if the speech holds its ground, the *author* quits the *scene* delighted"; (Nehamas and Woodruff) "if it remains on the books, he is delighted and leaves *the stage as a poet*"; (Rowe) "if it stays written down, the *author* leaves the *theatre* delighted." The maker of the speech/author/poet=*poietes*; theater/scene/stage=*theatron*.

99 All three lawmakers were famous for their political innovations or reforms. Lykourgos is legendary founder of Sparta's constitution and military system. Solon was elected *archon* in Athens in 594 BCE to redesign a government in crisis and to help redress the grievances of the poor. Darius, King of Persia from 521-486, was also renowned for his political reforms of an empire in turmoil. Of the three, only Solon was also a poet, but that is not what is stressed here. Nor is his role as poet important at 278c where Solon is grouped with those who write political tracts, and not with poets.

written or intends to write anything, whether it be a political or private written work, whether he writes with measure like a speech-maker or without measure like an unskilled speaker?[100]

e **Phaedrus**: Are you asking if we ought to do this? What would anyone possibly live for—so to speak—if not for such pleasures? It is not, I suppose, for those pleasures which necessarily cause pain before pleasure or else no pleasure at all, a condition which is true for nearly all bodily pleasures, and so are rightly called slavish.

Socrates: Well, we seem to have leisure time now for it. And at the same
259a time the cicadas, singing overhead and conversing with each other as they do in this stifling heat, seem to be looking down on us also. If they should see that the two of us are not talking but, like most men at noontime, are slumbering and bewitched by them because our minds are idle, they would justly laugh at us and believe that we were some slaves coming to a small resting place, like sheep sleeping around a spring at noontime. But if they see that we are conversing and sailing
b past them, as if past Sirens, unbewitched, then perhaps they might admire us and give us the gift of honor which they have from the gods to give to human beings.[101]

Phaedrus: What gift is this? I don't think I've heard of this one.

Socrates: Really? It's unimaginable that a lover of the Muses wouldn't have heard of such things. The story goes that once upon a time before the Muses were born these creatures were human beings, but after the Muses were born and singing was revealed, some people in those days
c were so dumbstruck with pleasure that they just sang, actually taking no interest in food or drink, and they died before they knew what happened. Later, the race of cicadas grew from those human beings and received the following honor from the Muses: to have no need for food when born but straightway, without food or drink, to sing until they die, and then going to the Muses to report back, announcing who

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100 The verbal play in this passage exceeds 258b2-3. The passage is more comlex than usually seen. The antithesis of *politikon* and *idiotikon* refers to political and private prose writings. The antithesis of *poietes* and *idiotes* marks a more difficult juxtaposition. Others have translated: "whether *in the verse* **of** *the poet or the plain speech* **of** *prose*" (Hackforth); whether "*poetic verse or plain rose*" (Nehemas and Woodruff); "whether he writes *as a poet, in verse, or in plain man's prose*" (Rowe). See note 124.

101 "Small resting place" recalls Socrates' description of the grove as a "resting place" (230b2). In the beginning of the dialogue Socrates said that he had no leisure to consider myths (229e4), a condition which appears to have changed. It is important to note that the cicadas as Sirens signal a danger but as the bestowers of a gift of honor a benefit. Both terms are Homeric; "gifts of honor" reoccurs at 262d5.

on earth honors which one of them. Reporting to Terpsichore those who honor her in the choruses, they make them more dear to her; and they report to Erato those who honor her in erotic matters, and so forth for the other Muses according to the form of each one's honor. But they report to Kalliope with the beautiful voice, the oldest of the Muses, and to heavenly Ourania, the second oldest, those who have gone through life loving wisdom and honoring their musical art; for of all the Muses these two send out the most beautiful voices and are especially fond of heaven and of speeches, both divine and human.[102] For many reasons, then, we must say something and not fall asleep at the noon-hour. d

Phaedrus: Yes, then, we must keep speaking.

Socrates: Therefore, we ought to consider the very thing we proposed just now to consider—how one is able to speak and write beautifully, and how not. e

Phaedrus: Clearly.

Socrates: Then, isn't it necessary for those who intend to speak well and beautifully to have before all else a discursive understanding of the truth about the subject he means to discuss?

Phaedrus: About this, my dear Socrates, I've heard people say that a student studying to become an orator need not learn what justice really is but merely what it seems to be to the masses who are in the position to pass judgment. Nor does he have to learn what is truly good or beautiful but only what seems so; persuading comes from this, not from the truth. 260a

Socrates: "The word cannot be cast aside,"[103] Phaedrus, that is, the word which the wise utter, but we must consider whether they are saying something significant. In particular, we can't ignore what you said just now.

Phaedrus: Yes, right.

Socrates: Let's look at the question like this.

Phaedrus: How?

Socrates: If I should persuade you to ward off the enemy by buying a horse and neither of us should know what a horse was, but I happened to know that Phaedrus believed a horse was a tamed animal with very large ears... b

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102 For divine and human narratives, see 246a. Divine speech, no doubt, discusses the thing itself, whereas human speech must rely upon images and myth. Inspiration and mantic speech blur these distinctions and through them, as perhaps through a love of wisdom, human *logoi* may include something of divine *logoi*.

103 Socrates is quoting Nestor from *Iliad* 2.361.

Phaedrus: Socrates, this would be ludicrous.

Socrates: Not quite yet, but it would be ludicrous if in all seriousness I should persuade you by fabricating a speech in praise of an ass, calling it a horse and claiming that the creature is invaluable at home and
c on campaign, suitable to fight from and to carry equipment and many other things besides.

Phaedrus: This would be totally ludicrous.

Socrates: But isn't it better to be ludicrous and friendly, rather than clever and hostile?

Phaedrus: So it seems.

Socrates: So, when a rhetorician who is mindless of good and evil encounters a city in the same condition and attempts to persuade it, not by praising a mere shadow of an ass as if it were a horse but by praising evil as good, and by carefully studying public opinion, he persuades the city to do evil things rather than good ones, what sort of fruit do
d you think this rhetorician would harvest from the seed he has sown?

Phaedrus: Not at all a good one.

Socrates: Don't you think, my good man, that we have chastised the art of speaking more harshly than need be? Lady Rhetoric might reply perhaps: "Astonishing fellows, what nonsense you speak. I never required anyone to be ignorant of the truth when he learns to speak, but—if my counsel means something—to master the truth and then take me up. But I do make one major claim: without me, in no way will a man who knows the truth be able to persuade with art."

e **Phaedrus**: Will she not be just when saying this?

Socrates: Yes, I would say so, provided that the arguments assailing her testify that she IS an art. For I seem to hear some arguments on the war path, as it were, bearing solemn testimony that she lies and that she IS NOT an art but an activity devoid of art. For, as the Spartans say, there can be no genuine art of speaking, either now or at any time in the future, without there being a firm hold on truth.[104]

261a **Phaedrus**: We must hear these arguments, Socrates. Lead them out so we can review what they say and how they say it.

Socrates: Approach, my noble creatures; persuade Phaedrus, this beautiful boy,[105] that unless he loves wisdom sufficiently, he will never become a competent speaker about anything. And let Phaedrus respond.

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104 It is likely that *etymos* is used here to recall Stesichorus' and Socrates' previous palinodes in this dialogue (see note 59). For the argument that rhetoric is artless, also see Plato's *Gorgias* 462b-c.

105 See Glossary under *Beloved*. "This beautiful boy" is a literal translation of *kallipaida* and echoes Socrates' address of the boy to whom he delivers the

Phaedrus: Ask away.

Socrates: Isn't the art of rhetoric, taken as a whole, a certain guiding of souls[106] through words, not only in the law courts and other places of public assembly but also in private? Doesn't the same art deal with major and minor matters and is it any more honorable, if correctly employed, when used in serious matters than when used in trivial ones? Or how have you heard these things? b

Phaedrus: No, by god, not at all in the way you've described it. The art of rhetoric in speech or written form is most evident in the courts, also in the public assembly in speech form. I have not heard the term applied more widely.

Socrates: Why is that? Do you mean that you have only heard of Nestor's rhetorical treatises, or Odysseus', which they wrote in their idle moments at Troy, but nothing of Palamedes' treatise?[107]

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palinode (cf. 243e); an ancient source argues that here the word means "a father of beautiful offspring," that is, a begetter of speeches (for which, see 242a-b). In either case, Socrates is punning on Phaedrus' name: *kallipaida te Phaidron*. The words "sufficiently" and "competent" translate *hikanos* (the adverbial form) and *hikanos* (the adjectival form).

106 There are two key and shocking aspects of this definition of rhetoric. The first regards the term "a certain guiding of souls" (*psychagogia tis*), a word with a negative connotation at this time, suggesting for the dead a conjuring up of souls from the underworld (as in Aristophanes' *Birds* 1555) and for the living persuasion through witchcraft or enchantment. See Plato's *Laws* 909b when criticizing certain Sophists, or Isocrates, *ad Nic.* II.49; cf. Aristotle's *Poetics* 1450a33-4. The second shock for Phaedrus is the association of rhetoric with private discourse, as all handbooks discussed rhetoric only in a public context (although Lysias' and Socrates' first speech are obvious examples of rhetoric working on the private level). Socrates' definition of rhetoric here is analogous to what we find in Plato's *Gorgias*, except that there reference to soul-leading is omitted and attention is only on public persuasion, not public and private (i.e. philosophic) rhetoric (cf. 452e, 453d-54a). In this passage *psychagogia* may be used neutrally but when Socrates returns to this definition of speech and uses this word again (271c10), it cannot be doubted that he uses it in a positive sense, "the capacity of speech" (*logou dynamis*) having the potential to move the soul from the earthly realm to divine beauty. Also see note 142.

107 The ancient Greeks show no awareness of epic oral composition. The verb here is *synegrapsaten*, used elsewhere in the dialogue for prose writing.

c **Phaedrus**: Yes, I swear it by Zeus; I haven't heard of Nestor's either, unless you make our Gorgias a kind of Nestor and you make Odysseus a Thrasymachos or a Theodoros.[108]

Socrates: Perhaps. Let these examples pass, but tell me: what do the opposing parties do in the courts? Don't they speak on opposite sides of a case? Or what shall we say?

Phaedrus: Just that.

Socrates: About the just and the unjust?

Phaedrus: Yes.

Socrates: Isn't it the case that the person who does this with art can make
d the same argument, before the same audience, appear just at one time and, when he wants, unjust?

Phaedrus: How true.

Socrates: So in the speech in the public assembly, will he make the same argument seem good to the city at one time, and at another time its opposite?

Phaedrus: Yes, just so.

Socrates: Don't we see just this very thing in the case of the artful Palamedes from Elea so that the same things naturally seem to his listeners like and unlike, one and many, at rest and in motion?[109]

Phaedrus: That's certainly true.

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108 In Homer, men could exhibit excellence (*arete)* on the battlefield or in public speaking in the *agora;* Nestor and Odysseus were renowned especially for their ability to persuade others. Palamedes, who was part of the Trojan expedition but almost unmentioned in Homeric epic, was famous for his cunning (and in some traditions, though not in the *Phaedrus*, credited with inventing the Greek alphabet). In Athens' democracy, where all citizens were theoretically on equal footing, the art of public speaking was particularly praised. Athenians enjoyed comparing contemporary speakers to Homeric heroes. It is significant that none of the contemporary speakers singled out here are Athenian citizens, although the Athenians were considered masters of rhetoric. All three may have taught rhetoric in Athens. Gorgias, the most skillful of the three, is from Leontini in Sicily; Thrasymachos comes from Chalcedon in the north and plays a major role in Book I of the *Republic* (and is mentioned later in this dialogue at 267c); the now-forgotten Theodorus is from Byzantium and is credited with writing a handbook on rhetoric (cf. 266e).

109 The Palamedes from Elea (in Sicily) is Zeno, famous for his paradoxes, especially one about a racer gaining on his opponent by cutting the gap in halves and never surpassing him. He is also famous for demonstrating how an opponent's argument leads to separate and contradictory conclusions. Perhaps in this context, Socrates groups him among the sophists.

Socrates: So, there is argument and counter-argument not only in the courts and places of public assembly but it seems that in all cases of speaking there would be one and the same art of some kind (if indeed it is an art) which enables someone to make everything similar to everything else, provided that things are comparable and able to be compared and, when someone else makes these similarities but hides the fact that he is doing so, to bring this to light. e

Phaedrus: What sort of similarities do you mean?

Socrates: It will become clear, I think, if we ask the question in this way: is deception more likely to exist when the difference between things is great or small?

Phaedrus: When the difference is small. 262a

Socrates: And when you go from one thing to its opposite, surely you will escape notice more easily if you take small steps rather than large ones.

Phaedrus: How could it be otherwise?

Socrates: So, if one intends to deceive someone else and not be deceived himself, he must discern accurately the similarities and dissimilarities of things.

Phaedrus: Yes; that's imperative.

Socrates: Can anyone who does not know the truth in each case possibly distinguish the similarities great and small between something he doesn't know and other things?

Phaedrus: Impossible. b

Socrates: For people who hold opinions contrary to the things themselves and are deceived, it is clear that this deception slips in through certain likenesses.

Phaedrus: Yes, it happens in just this way.

Socrates: Will it be possible, then, for a man with art to lead anyone incrementally, step by small step, through similarities away from the truth to its opposite (and avoid being deceived himself), if he is not knowledgeable in each case of the things that are?

Phaedrus: No, never.

Socrates: Therefore, my comrade, someone who does not know the truth but has hunted down public opinion will exhibit an art of speech which is at once laughable in some way, as it seems, and artless. c

Phaedrus: Probably.

Socrates: So in Lysias' speech which you have in your hand now and in our speeches, would you like to consider what we said with, and without, art?

Phaedrus: I'd like nothing more, especially as we are not offering sufficient examples and our present speech is somehow bare.

d **Socrates**: All right, then. By some chance, as it seems, both the speeches were models of sorts, revealing how someone who knows the truth could play around with words and lead his audience on. And, Phaedrus, I consider that the gods of this place are the cause of this, and maybe the prophets of the Muses, as well, the ones singing over our heads who might have breathed this gift of honor into us.[110] At any rate, I have no share in any art of speaking, I suspect.

Phaedrus: Let it be as you say. Only make your words clear.

Socrates: Come on, read the beginning of Lysias' speech.

e **Phaedrus**: "You understand my affairs, and you've already heard how I think they help us both, when things work out. Nor do I expect to fail to get what I ask for just because I don't happen to be in love with you. When lovers lose their passion, they come to regret..."

Socrates: Stop. Our job is to note where he errs and what he makes without art, isn't it?

263a **Phaedrus**: Yes.

Socrates: Isn't this much clear to all—that, generally speaking, we agree about some words,[111] but are divided over others?

Phaedrus: I think I know what you mean, but still, try to speak more clearly.

Socrates: When someone says "iron" or "silver," don't we all think of the same thing?

Phaedrus: Certainly.

Socrates: But how about when we say "just" or "good"? Do some interpret them in one way, and others in another way, and don't we part company both with each other—and with ourselves?

Phaedrus: Absolutely.

b **Socrates**: In some things, then, we agree; in others, not.

Phaedrus: Right.

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110 There is some dispute about what two speeches Socrates is referring to. Most understand the reference to include Lysias' speech and Socrates' two speeches counted as one. But as Lysias' speech could not have been inspired by the cicadas, it seems more likely that the two speeches refer only to Socrates' two. "Lead on" (*parago*) is usually translated "mislead" but the more neutral "lead on" or "influence" fits the context better. The word is also used in a neutral sense at 261a2, its only other appearance in the dialogue. "The gods are the cause" could also be translated "I blame the gods"; again context suggests the more neutral reading. For the gods "in this place," see notes 18, 113, and 117.

111 The text is far from clear here; I follow Richards' emendation, taking "words" for "such things."

Socrates: In which, then, are we more easily deceived, and in which is rhetoric more powerful?

Phaedrus: Clearly in those cases when we flounder about.

Socrates: Then, anyone interested in pursuing rhetorical art must first of all divide these words systematically and grasp some defining characteristics of these two forms of words, distinguishing which words will necessarily cause the most people to flounder about and which will not.

Phaedrus: He who grasps this would have really understood a beautiful thing—no question about that. c

Socrates: Second, I take it, that as a rhetorician approaches each *word*[112] it has not escaped his notice but he observes sharply whether what he is about to say belongs to one of these classes or the other.

Phaedrus: Yes, and so?

Socrates: What then? Regarding love, shall we say that it belongs to the class of disputed words, or not?

Phaedrus: The disputed class, without a doubt. Or do you think it would have been possible for you to say what you did about it just now, that love is harmful both to the beloved and the lover, and again that it is the greatest of good things?

Socrates: Very well said. But tell me this also—for I can't entirely remember because a god possessed me. Did I define love at the beginning of my speech?[113] d

Phaedrus: Yes, by god, you did, absolutely yes.

Socrates: Ah! So you claim that the Nymphs, the daughters of Achelous, and Pan, Hermes' son,[114] are much more artful in making speeches than is Lysias, the son of Kephalos! Or is this nonsense, and did Lysias too, at the beginning of his erotic speech, compel us to see Eros as one definite thing (the way he wanted us to see him) and did he then proceed to the end of his speech, arranging everything in order to this perception? Would you like to read the beginning of that speech again? e

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112 The Greek does not specify the noun to which "each" refers. Following Richards' emendation, the referent would be "words."

113 As at 262d, it is not clear to what this refers. Socrates defines love at the beginning of the first speech (237c-238c) but in the second speech only defines love after he has discussed the four forms of divine madness (252bc; cf. 249c). The singular here for speech may refer to both speeches as one, or more likely only to the first speech, as only in that speech does a definition come at the beginning of the speech.

114 Socrates ends the dialogue with a prayer to Pan (279b), a god who almost never appears in other Platonic writings. In Plato's *Cratylus*, Socrates describes Pan with a goat-like and rough lower body and a human and smooth upper body; he is also associated with speech.

Phaedrus: If you wish, but you won't find what you're looking for.

Socrates: Read, so I can hear how he does it.

Phaedrus: "You understand my affairs, and you've already heard how I
264a think they help us both, when things work out. Nor do I expect to fail to get what I ask for just because I don't happen to be in love with you.

When lovers lose their passion, they come to regret whatever benefits they may have conferred."

Socrates: He's really far from doing what we're looking for, it appears. He doesn't start at the beginning, but at the end, swimming through the speech upstream on his back, beginning with what a lover would say to his darling after his love is gone. Or is this nonsense, Phaedrus, dear heart?[115]

b **Phaedrus**: It is to be sure, Socrates, an end, and he makes his speech about that.

Socrates: And what about the rest? Doesn't it seem as if the elements in the speech were poured out in a heap? Or would you say that what came second must by some necessity come second or that any part had to come where it does? It seemed to me in my ignorance that he said, not without some nobility, whatever came to mind as he wrote. Did you find any compelling logic of composition by which he arranged one thought after another systematically?

c **Phaedrus**: You're kind to think that I'm able to make such a critical assessment of his work.

Socrates: But I suspect that you would say this at least: every speech like a living creature should be put together with its own body so that it is not without a head or without a foot but has a middle and extremities, written in such a way that its parts fit together and form a whole.

Phaedrus: How could it be otherwise?

Socrates: Consider, then, whether your comrade's speech is composed like a living creature or not, and you will find that it differs not at all from the epigram which some say was inscribed on the tomb of Midas, the old king of Phrygia.

d **Phaedrus**: What sort of epigram is that and what's wrong with it?

Socrates: It reads like this:

A bronze maiden I am; on Midas' remains I lie.
So long as rain falls and mighty oaks grow,
Stationed here by this much-lamented tomb,
I announce to travelers-by that Midas is buried here.

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115 "Dear heart," literally "dear head," an expression of endearment found in epic (cf. *Il.* 8.281); cf. Socrates' reference to Phaedrus as "divine head" (234d).

You can see, I think, that it hardly matters in what order you read these lines. e

Phaedrus: Socrates, you're scoffing at our speech!

Socrates: Then, let's drop it lest you be upset. Yet, it seems to me that Lysias' speech does offer abundant examples which could be profitably examined, provided no one attempted to imitate them—but let's go on to our other speeches, for in them, I think, there was something useful to look at for those interested in examining speeches.

Phaedrus: What would that be? 265a

Socrates: The two were opposites; one said that the lover should be favored; the other the non-lover.

Phaedrus: Yes, and in a very manly manner, too.

Socrates: I thought you would speak the truth and say "in a mad manner." That is what I was looking for. We said that love was a kind of madness. Didn't we?

Phaedrus: Yes.

Socrates: And that there were two forms of madness, one caused by human illness, the other by a divine upheaval of customary beliefs.

Phaedrus: Yes, exactly. b

Socrates: Of the divine type, we separated out four parts assigned to four gods: a seer's inspiration coming from Apollo, mystical initiation ascribed to Dionysos, a poetic madness coming from the Muses, and a fourth madness coming from Aphrodite and Eros (Love) which we called an erotic madness and the best. In some way, though I can't say exactly how, we offered an image of erotic experience and perhaps touched upon a truth in some instances and in others were wide of the mark, blending together a not totally unpersuasive account in a playful way—but also in a measured way and with due reverence—in a mythic hymn to your master and mine, Phaedrus, to Eros, the guardian of beautiful boys.[116] c

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116 The verb *prospaizo* has two meanings: "to do something in a playful manner" (as at 262d2) and "to sing in praise of." Both meanings apply to the hymn of the palinode (cf. 247c3-4), characterized as playful speech at 262d2, as the dialogue is characterized at 278b7 (where it is also characterized as "measured speech," as is the hymn to Pan at the end of the dialogue (279c)). Benardete comments that the nature of Socratic play is somehow related to the cultic meaning of the verb, that is, playfulness in speech is a response to the gulf that separates divine and human *logoi* (259d). When one approaches the divine in cult, *prospaizei* refers to cultic song and dance and when one approaches the divine in speech, *prospaizei* refers to praise (i.e. nothing to do with irony) and to performance (as in actors addressing an audience).

Phaedrus: And, for me, certainly not unpleasant to the ear.

Socrates: Then, let's take up what follows from this point: how was the speech able to pass from censure to praise.[117]

Phaedrus: What do you have in mind?

Socrates: I'd say that everything else was in fact done in play for sport, but that some things were mentioned by chance and two of these hit upon forms or aspects[118] of speech which would not be unpleasant to
d seize upon if someone had the power to capture their power by means of a systematic art.

Phaedrus: What things?

Socrates: The first involves someone whose sight can bring into a single form things which have previously been scattered in all directions so that by defining each thing he makes clear any subject he ever wants to teach about. So just now speaking about Eros, we defined what it is, whether well or poorly. The definition, at least, allowed the speech to progress with clarity and internal consistency.

Phaedrus: And what do you say the second form is, Socrates?

e **Socrates**: To have the power, conversely, to cut up a composition, form by form according to its natural joints and not to try to hack through any part as a bad butcher might. Rather take the example of the two recent speeches which seized upon one common form to explain the loss of
266a coherent thought; just as the body, which is one thing, is naturally divided into pairs of things with both parts having the same name (called, for example, left arm and right arm), so also the two speeches assumed that madness is by its nature one form in us, though capable of being divided into two parts. One of the speeches cut the part on the left and did not cease cutting until it found among these parts something called "left love" and then, with absolute justice, abused it; the other speech, however, led us to the madness on the right side and discovered there a love with the same name as the other but of some
b divine nature. Setting this before us, the speech praised it as the greatest cause of good for us.

Phaedrus: This is very true.

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[117] Speech here refers to Socrates' two speeches. See notes 110 and 113.

[118] Socrates uses one word, *eidea*, where I use two: "forms or aspects." I use the two words, "forms and aspects," to draw attention to the special quality of Socrates' terminology which applies the same word, *eidea*, to the eternal forms of the universe, of which the things on earth are only likenesses, or images, and to the aspects or forms of speech. As we discover in what follows, understanding the forms of the universe and the forms of speech both involve understanding the relation between the one and the many, and discovering an underlying unity out of plurality.

Socrates: I myself am certainly a lover, Phaedrus, of these processes of division and collection, so that I may have the ability to speak and think.[119] If I believe that someone else has the capacity to see into a single thing and to see the natural outgrowth from a single thing toward many things,[120] I pursue him, following "right behind in his tracks as if he were a god."[121] And furthermore—god knows whether I've been speaking correctly or not—up to now I have been calling those who have the capacity to do this, dialecticians. But tell me what we ought to call them if we follow what you and Lysias have taught us. Or is it just that art of speaking which Thrasymachos and all the others use, becoming themselves *wise*[122] at speaking and making others the same, if they are willing to bestow gifts upon their teachers as if they were kings? c

Phaedrus: The men are kingly, although they certainly do not have the kind of knowledge that you are asking about. But you are right, I'd say, to call this form dialectical, although the rhetorical part has escaped us, I think.

Socrates: What's this? Can anything really be valuable and beautiful that is undertaken in an artful way but has omitted the dialectical method? If so, we—you and I—must not in any way dishonor such a thing and we must consider what part of the rhetorical art has been omitted. d

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119 Socrates' language here is particularly dense and playful. By calling himself a lover just before he addresses Phaedrus by name, Socrates suggests, as he has repeatedly throughout the dialogue, that he's in love with Phaedrus and wishes to seduce him (i.e. philosophical pederasty and philosophy may go hand-in-hand; cf. 247c); but as it turns out, Socrates is more truly in love with the art of speech-making than with the boy in front of him. In saying that speech and thought depend upon a love of division and collection, Socrates neatly assimilates true rhetoric to dialectic, the philosopher's *mode* of discourse. The *Phaedrus*, more than any other Platonic dialogue, attempts to discover the common ground shared by these two erotic activities. This assimilation is dependent, of course, upon rhetoric's proper subordination to philosophy itself and knowledge of the truth, to the extent humanly possible. I wish to thank Frank Trivigno for elements of this formulation. (see 261aff, above, and 271c10ff, and especially 273d1ff, below).

120 Here I follow a manuscript reading of *pephykos* modifying *hen*; many editors read *pephykota* which would translate: "to see the things which grow naturally into one thing and toward many things."

121 Socrates appears to be adapting loosely phrasing from the *Odyssey*; see 2.406 and 5.193.

122 See Glossary under *Art*. By calling Thrasymachos and other *sophoi*, or skilled masters of the art of speaking, Socrates implies the possible common ground between the *philo-sophos*, or lover of wisdom, and the *sophos*-rhetorician.

Phaedrus: There are a thousand such things, I suppose, Socrates, in the rhetorical textbooks.

Socrates: Good for you to remember them. First, I think, is the *prooimion*, or Preface, which must be spoken at the beginning of a speech. This is what you mean, isn't it: the refinements of the art?[123]

e **Phaedrus**: Yes.

Socrates: Second, there's the *diegesis*, or Exposition and Testimonies (*marturiai*) from witnesses for it; third, Proofs (*tekmeria*); fourth, Argument by Plausibility (*eikota*). That very good man from Byzantium, the one who is so cunning in his speeches, also mentions Confirmation (*pistosis*) and Further Confirmation (*epipistosis*), I think.

Phaedrus: Are you referring to the worthy Theodoros?

267a **Socrates**: Who else? And one must construct a Cross-Examination (*elenchon*) and a Further Cross-Examination (*epexelenchon*) in a courtroom accusation (*kategoria*) and defense (*apologia*). Shall we not bring the most elegant Euenos from Paros into our circle; he discovered Covert Allusion (*hypodelosis*) and Incidental Praise (*parepainos*). Some say that as a mnemonic device he delivered Incidental Censure (*parapsogos*) in

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123 Preface marks "the first item in a series of technical terms of rhetorical theory or practice which Plato amuses himself to enumerate, holding them up to ridicule," as de Vries comments *ad* 266d7. From 266d7-267e8, Socrates names 18 parts of a composition from Preface to Recapitulation, or summary (which must be arranged with a sense of the whole: 264c, 268d, 269c), and he names 10 rhetorical theorists. Not one is an Athenian citizen, but most, if not all, visited and taught in Athens: Theodorus from Byzantium (nothing more known of him); Euenos from Paros (an island in the Aegean), mentioned as a teacher in the *Apology* (20b) and a poet in the *Phaedo* (60d); Tisias of Syracuse (in Sicily), probably dead at the dramatic date of the dialogue, taught the importance of likenesses, *eikota;* Gorgias from Leontini (in Sicily), a famous sophist, his visit to Athens in 427 is seen as a landmark in the history of rhetoric; Prodicus from Ceos (an Aegean island), a sophist, a participant in Plato's *Protagoras;* Hippias from Elis (in the Peloponnese), a sophist, in Plato's *Hippias Major* and *Minor;* Polus of Acragas (in Sicily), in Plato's *Gorgias* where it is said he made rhetoric an art (462b); Likumnius from Argos or Tiryns (in the Peloponnese), said to be Gorgias' pupil, identified as a rhetorician and poet by Aristotle, *Rhetoric* III. 12, 1413b14 and 13,1414b17; Protagoras of Abdera (coast of Thrace), the most famous of the sophists, Thrasymachos of Chalcedon (opposite Byzantium), a sophist and significant figure in Plato's *Republic.* Isocrates, an Athenian and Plato's contemporary, was a student of Prodicus, Gorgias, and Tisias and boasts that he can make small things appear large and new things old (*Panegyricus* 8). "Refinements" echoes Phaedrus' characterization of Lysias' speech (227c) and the description of the grove (230c).

meter[124]—for the man is wise. Shall we let Tisias and Gorgias sleep?—men who saw that Argument by Plausibility was more valued than truths and who by the force of speech made the small appear great, and the great small; and made the newest innovations appear old, and **b** old things new; and on all subjects discovered conciseness of speech and infinite extension. When Prodicus once heard me say this, he laughed and claimed that he alone discovered what was necessary for the art of speeches: that they be neither long nor short but of due measure.

Phaedrus: Most clever of you, Prodicus.

Socrates: What about Hippias? I think our friend from Elis would agree with Prodicus.

Phaedrus: Yes, and why not?

Socrates: What should we say about Polus and his Muses' Treasury of Speech, including his classifications for things like Reduplication **c** (*diplasiologia*), Speaking in Maxims (*gnomologia*), and Speaking in Images or Similes (*eikonologia*), and those terms which Likumnius made up for him as a gift for his making of Good Diction (*euepeia*).

Phaedrus: Doesn't Protagoras take credit for similar inventions, Socrates?

Socrates: Yes, a certain Correct Diction (*orthoepeia*), my darling, and many other fine things. But the mighty Chalcedonian—Thrasymachos—I'd say excelled in the art of drawing out the pitiful wailings over old age and poverty.[125] He was also a clever fellow at infuriating a crowd and **d** then with his bewitching incantations soothing the angry mob, as he put it. Also, no one was better at hurling slanders, then washing them away, whatever their source may have been. But when it comes to the end of a speech, all agree what it should be, though some call it Recapitulation (*epanodos*), while others call it something else.

Phaedrus: Are you referring to the summation of each point, reminding the listeners at the end of what they've heard?

Socrates: That's it, and if you have something else to add about this art...

Phaedrus: Minor points only, nothing important.

Socrates: Then let's drop them and scrutinize those other things more **268a** closely under the light and ask what in the world is the power of this art.

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124 See Glossary under *Unskilled speaker*. *en metro* here clearly means "in verse." At 258d10, I translate as "with measured speech," while just below at 267b5 I translate *metron* as "of due measure."

125 Socrates' phrasing parodies Thrasymachos; exaggerated rhythmical patterns of speech.

Phaedrus: A power with a very great force, Socrates, particularly when in the assemblies of the multitude.[126]

Socrates: So it is. But, my inspired fellow, also consider whether you also see holes in the fabric, as I do.

Phaedrus: Just show me.

Socrates: Tell me. If someone were to approach your friend Dr. Eruximachos or his father Dr. Akoumenos and proclaim: "I know how to apply cer-
b tain things to a body to make it warm, or to cool it down, as I wish, and I know how to induce vomiting, if need be, or in turn to make the body emit from the other end, and everything else of this kind. With this knowledge I consider myself worthy to be a doctor and to make someone else a doctor by passing along this knowledge to him." What do you think they would say, hearing this?

Phaedrus: How else but to ask if he also knew who needed these treatments, and when, and for how long?

Socrates: If he should reply: "I know none of these things, but I judge that
c my student learning from me will be able on his own to practice what you ask about."

Phaedrus: I think they would say that he was a raving madman, if he thinks he has become a doctor after hearing something from a book or happening upon a few drugs, when he has no understanding of the art.

Socrates: What if someone were to approach Sophocles or Euripides and say that he knew how to make very long speeches about small things and very short ones about great things, and to compose pitiful laments
d at will or, by contrast, threats and scares, and such things, and that teaching these things he knows how to transmit the making of tragedy?

Phaedrus: I suspect, they would also laugh, Socrates, if someone thinks that tragedy is anything less than the proper arrangement of parts, each fitted appropriately in relation to the other and to the whole.

Socrates: But I don't think that they would revile them harshly but speak the way a musician might if he came upon a man who thought that he understood harmony when he simply happened to know how to

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126 It is difficult to determine whether Phaedrus is critical or admiring of this power: his language clearly refers to Athens' democracy and in less than a flattering light: assemblies translates *synodoi* which can refer to public gatherings in assemblies or political unions. Plato often uses *plethos* (a great number, multitude, mob) as a stand in for *demos*, the political body of Athens. Regardless of tone, Phaedrus still thinks of rhetoric in terms of public speech, despites Socrates' efforts to refine rhetoric as an art in private as well as in public settings (261a-b).

make the highest and lowest note. He wouldn't bark out: "You're sick, crazy in the head," but because he's musical he'd say more gently: "My excellent man, while it is necessary to know these things if one intends to understand the laws of harmony, it's quite possible that a man with your level of expertise might not know the slightest thing about harmony. You see, you know the prerequisites for harmony but not harmonics itself." e

Phaedrus: How perfectly true.

Socrates: So too Sophocles would say that his man was displaying to them the prerequisites for tragedy but not the tragic art; and Dr. Akoumenos similarly that his man knew the prerequisites for healing but not the healing art. 269a

Phaedrus: Just so.

Socrates: What do you think the honey-tongued Adrastos, or even Pericles, would say if they should hear about these absolutely beautiful techniques we've been discussing—Speaking Concisely and Similes and the other such things which we were going through and scrutinizing under the light. Like you and me, would they bark at them and utter some ignorant phrase against those who wrote and taught these things as if they were a rhetorical art; or, because they are more skillful than we are, would they actually chastise us, saying: "Phaedrus and Socrates, you shouldn't be harsh but forgiving if some people don't know how to think dialectically and are unable therefore to define what rhetoric is. On this account, they think that they have discovered the rhetorical art when they know only its prerequisites; and teaching others these things they believe that they have taught the art perfectly and that their students themselves must on their own come up with a way of saying each of the parts persuasively and with a way of fitting the parts appropriately into the whole, thinking that this is no work at all."[127] b c

Phaedrus: But surely, Socrates, the art which these men teach and write about as rhetoric in their handbooks is something like this. What you've said is true, I think. But the real art of rhetoric and persuasion, how and from what source can one come by this? d

Socrates: If you mean the ability, Phaedrus, to become a perfect competitor, it is probably—I'd say certainly—just like everything else. If you have an innate ability for rhetoric, you'll become a famous rhetorician, provided that you acquire knowledge and work at your art; but if your natural abilities fall short of this, you'll be less than perfect. But to the extent that there is art in this whole business, you're not likely to find the method or right approach, I'd say, where Lysias or Thrasymachos go.

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127 The arrangement of Socrates' own sentence progressively degenerates, no doubt to illustrate humorously the importance of his point.

Phaedrus: But where, then?

e **Socrates**: My excellent friend, in all likelihood Pericles is the most perfect of all the Greeks in this art.

Phaedrus: How so?

270a **Socrates**: All of the great arts are in need of highfalutin prattling and star-gazin theorizing about nature. For this kind of lofty thought and working through to perfection in every way seems somehow to enter in from that source. And Pericles achieved this, topping off his natural talent. Falling in with a man like Anaxagoras and being filled with star-gazin theorizing and coming to understand the nature of mind and mindlessness – the very things Anaxagoras discussed at great length, Pericles drew from all this and applied what fit to the art of speech.[128]

Phaedrus: Explain what you mean.

b **Socrates**: That the medical art works in the same way as the rhetorical art, I suppose.

Phaedrus: How so?

Socrates: In both you need to determine its nature, of the body in one, of the soul in the other, if you intend (not merely with empirical practice but with art) to instill health and strength by applying drugs and diet for one, and to impart excellence and the persuasion you wish by applying words and customary rules of conduct for the other.[129]

Phaedrus: This seems plausible enough, Socrates.

c **Socrates**: Do you think that it is possible to understand the nature of the soul at all intelligently without understanding the nature of the whole?[130]

Phaedrus: If we are to follow Hippocrates at all, Ascelpius' heir, it is not possible to understand anything about the body either without this method.

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128 Socrates is certainly speaking ironically about Pericles and Anaxagoras' good influence upon him. In Plato's *Gorgias* (503c, 515c-16d), he has a low opinion of Pericles' rhetoric, nor in the *Apology* (26d-e) does he feel much affinity for Anaxagoras' work. In the *Clouds*, Aristophanes mocks Socrates' usage. By contrast, Plutarch in his *Life of Pericles* (4-6 and 8) reads Socrates' praise of Pericles as genuine. See Philip Slater, *A Commentary on Plutarch's Pericles* (Chapel Hill, 1989) 77.

129 By contrast, divine erotic madness causes an upheaval of customary beliefs (265a).

130 Socrates does not specify the whole of what. He is referring most likely to the nature of the whole universe; the other possibility is the nature of the whole human being (i.e. body and soul). See also 270cd.

Socrates: He speaks well, my friend, but it's still necessary, Hippocrates aside, to examine this account and ask whether it squares with ours.

Phaedrus: I agree.

Socrates: Consider, then, how Hippocrates and the true account speak about the nature of something. This is how we should speak about the nature of anything whatsoever: first, we should ask whether a nature is simple or multi-formed in regard to which we wish to be artful and to be able to make others artful. Then, if simple, we should consider its natural capacity, that is, what it can do to what, or in what ways it can be acted upon and by what. If it has multiple forms, we must count these and examine each of them as we did when we looked at the simple form: what is its natural capacity to do what to what or to suffer what by what. **d**

Phaedrus: Possibly, Socrates.

Socrates: At any rate to approach the subject without asking other questions would be like traveling with a blind man. On the other hand, whoever pursues anything with art must never be compared to the blind or deaf. Rather, it is clear that if someone teaches another how to make speeches with art, he will demonstrate precisely the essence of the nature of that to which the speeches are applied.[131] And that, doubtless, will be the soul. **e**

Phaedrus: Surely.

Socrates: Then all the efforts of this man are concentrated on this. For it's persuasion which he tries to implant in the soul. Doesn't he? **271a**

Phaedrus: Yes.

Socrates: It is clear, then, that Thrasymachos, and whoever else seriously teaches the art of rhetoric, will first describe the soul with full precision and make us see whether she is one and homogenous by nature or multi-formed like the figure of the body, since, as we said, this is what it means to demonstrate the nature of something.

Phaedrus: Yes, absolutely.

Socrates: Secondly, he will reveal what it naturally does to what or what it naturally suffers from what.

Phaedrus: Yes, surely.

Socrates: Thirdly, having classified the different kinds of speeches and kinds of soul and how these are affected, he will go through every cause, **b**

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131 At the beginning of the discussion about rhetoric, Phaedrus used the phrase *tekhne legein* to refer to those who speak with art in public places like the law courts (261b). Socrates has turned the argument so that now it refers to those who reveal the essential nature of the thing described.

aligning each type of speech to each type of soul, explaining the reason why one soul is necessarily persuaded by speeches of a certain sort and another is not.[132]

Phaedrus: This certainly would be the best way, in all likelihood.

Socrates: There is, my friend, no other way than this. If a model of a speech or an actual speech were made in some other way, it would never be
c spoken or written with art. But the writers today who produce Speech Manuals[133] (things you have heard) are rogues and keep the nature of the soul hidden from view, although they have a perfectly beautiful understanding of it. But until they speak and write in this way, let us not believe that they write with knowledge of this art.

Phaedrus: What way is that?

Socrates: It is not easy to offer the exact words but I am willing to say how one must write if one intends to be as artful as possible.

Phaedrus: Go on, then.

d **Socrates**: Since the capacity of speech is to guide the soul, someone intending to become a rhetorician must know what forms the soul possesses.[134] The number of forms is so and so; their quality such and such; hence some people are of this sort and others of that sort. When these divisions are made, he needs again to know that the forms of speeches are so and so and the quality of each such and such. Therefore, people of this sort can be easily persuaded by such and such for this or that reason to do one thing or another, while people of a different sort are

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132 Socrates appears to have in mind a complex soul of multiple parts, more diverse and complex, it would seem, than the tripartite soul of appetite, courage, and reason outlined in the *Republic*. "Different kinds of soul" translates *ta...psyches gene*. At 271d1-2, Socrates varies the expression, saying *psyche hosa eide echei* ("what forms the soul possesses"), phrases which I treat as roughly synonymous. Some argue that *gene* (in the first phrase) should be translated as "parts" and *eide* (in the second) as "kinds," but this distinction seems forced. At 270d1 and 271a7, the word for a multi-formed soul is *polyeidos*, perhaps analogous to *polyplokoteron*, polymorphic used to describe some mythic, mixed-bodied beasts at 230a4. *Polyeides* is also used to describe many-limbed excess (following the manuscript reading) at 238a3. At 277c2-3, Socrates draws a further distinction between a dappled, many-colored (*poikile*) and a simple (*haple*) soul. Socrates uses the same adjective *haple* (at 230a5-6) to contrast tamer, simpler beings with a share of divinity in them from wilder, polymorphic creatures. Also see notes 35, 46, and 155.

133 At 266ff, Socrates discusses a number of these manuals. When Socrates says that these present-day writers have a complete and thorough knowledge of the soul, he is being ironic, of course.

134 See notes 2 and 131.

hard to persuade for these reasons. The aspiring rhetorician must think these matters through in a sufficient manner and then, after that, observing them in actuality and being lived out before his eyes, he must e
be able to trace these actions keenly and perceptively, or else he won't be any better off than he was when he was absorbing these words in school. Only when he is able to explain sufficiently what type of person is persuaded by what type of speech and he has the ability to perceive and to determine for himself in the case of an individual he meets that he is this type of person and his nature is the very type 272a
that he heard about in school, and now that he finds himself in front of this man, he must apply these particular words in that particular way to persuade him of these things. After the young rhetorician has mastered all this and understood the appropriate times – both opportune and inopportune—for speaking and for holding back, for concise speech, for speech which stirs pity, for exaggeration, and for each of the other forms of speech he has learnt, only then, and not before, has the art been beautifully and perfectly mastered. But whenever in speak- b
ing, teaching, or writing he falls short in these matters but claims that he speaks with art, then the person who does not believe him is the stronger. "What do you think?" the prose-writer of this treatise might say. "Is it like this, Phaedrus and Socrates, or must the art of speaking be described differently?"

Phaedrus: It is not possible to describe it otherwise, Socrates, I suppose. Yet, this seems to be no small undertaking.

Socrates: True enough. That's why we must turn all the arguments every which way to consider whether there isn't an easier and more concise c
road to this art, so as not to go off on a long and rough path in vain when there is a short and smooth one available. And if from your listening to Lysias or anyone else you have any tips, try to remember them and tell us.

Phaedrus: I could try, but now I have nothing to say.

Socrates: Then, may I put in a word which I heard from some of those concerned about these things?

Phaedrus: Yes, surely.

Socrates: We hear after all, Phaedrus, that it's fair to hear the wolf's side of the story, too.

Phaedrus: And so, go on. d

Socrates: Well now, they say there's no need to revere these matters so or to climb such a long and circuitous path. For in every way—just as we said at the beginning of this speech[135]—if you want to become a

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135 Cf. 259e.

satisfactory orator there's no need to know the truth about good and just deeds or even whether human beings are this way or that by nature or by up-bringing. People in the courts couldn't give a fig for the
e truth about such matters, only for what is persuasive. The Plausible Argument, that's what you must turn to, if you want to speak with art. Sometimes it's imperative not even to mention what really happened, if it wasn't plausible enough; replace it with plausible arguments whether in a prosecution or a defense. Always be in pursuit of the Plausibility and bid the truth a hearty farewell. Stick to this through-
273a out the entire speech and you've got the sum total of the art.

Phaedrus: You've described perfectly, Socrates, what these self-professing speech artists claim. For I recall that we touched on this sort of thing briefly before and this seems to be the all-important point for people concerned with these matters.

Socrates: And I'm sure you've tramped through Tisias' work carefully. So
b let him tell us about this too: does he say that the Plausible Argument is anything other than the opinion of the masses?

Phaedrus: How could it be otherwise?

Socrates: Apparently having discovered this wise—and artful—technique, Tisias wrote that if a weak but brave man clobbers a strong but cowardly man and steals his cloak or something and is then dragged into court, it is imperative that neither man tell the truth. The coward must deny that he was clobbered by the brave man alone, and the defendant must establish through cross-examination that the two were alone,
c and make full use of that old saw: "How could a man like me lay a finger on a man like him?" The poor plaintiff will never admit his own cowardice but would try to make up another lie, quickly handing over a second opportunity for his adversary to cross examine. So in other scenarios as well, the rules of the art are like this. Aren't they, Phaedrus?

Phaedrus: Yes, surely.

Socrates: I'll be! What a cleverly concealed art, it seems, Tisias has unearthed, or whoever it may have been and whatever is the name which pleases him.[136] But, comrade, should we or shouldn't we say to him-

d **Phaedrus**: Say what?

Socrates: This: "Tisias, before you even appeared we had been saying for some time that most people hit upon this plausibility thing because it resembles the truth; we had just now explained how in every instance the man who knows the truth understands most beautifully how to find

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[136] Socrates, presumably, is referring to Corax (The Crow) of Syracuse (5th century), an obscure figure who is said to be the first teacher of rhetoric and Tisias' teacher. But it is equally possible that Corax is Tisias' nickname. See note 123.

these resemblances. Consequently, if you have something different to say about the art of speeches, we would listen; but if not, we shall be persuaded by what we have just explained, namely that, unless someone both enumerates the natures of those who are about to listen and is able to divide up beings according to their forms and to comprehend each individual thing by its unique form, he will not be an artist of speeches (to the extent that any human being can be). Nor will he ever acquire these skills without much diligence. A moderate man does not put himself through this labor in order to speak and to act in the company of human beings, but to put himself in a position to say what is gratifying to the gods and at all times to act in a gratifying manner to the best of his ability.[137] For certainly, Tisias, men wiser than we say that a man of intelligence must not concern himself with gratifying fellow slaves, except in a secondary way, but rather with gratifying masters who are good and from good stock.[138] So, if the circuit is long, don't be astonished. For great things – distinct from the goals you set— one must take the long way around. And yet, as our speech says, even these successes, should one wish them, best come from those more circuitous pursuits. e 274a

Phaedrus: That's said very beautifully, it seems to me, Socrates, if only anyone could do it.

Socrates: And yet even in reaching for the beautiful there is beauty, and also in suffering whatever it is that one suffers en route. b

Phaedrus: Certainly.

Socrates: Let this then be enough about the art and artlessness of speeches.[139]

Phaedrus: Yes, surely.

Socrates: But it remains to consider, doesn't it, what's befitting and what's not fitting in writing; when it is done well and when it's not fitting?[140]

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137 Note the lexical shift: the verb used here to describe human gratification of the gods through speech is the same which was used from the beginning of the dialogue by Phaedrus, Lysias, and Socrates to describe the favors which the beloved should grant to the lover (or non-lover).

138 For "from good stock," compare 246a8 in reference to the white horse of the soul. Some argue that this phrase cannot apply to gods and must be understood figuratively as meaning "wholly good." But in the context of slaves and masters, the notion of good stock, as well as good habits, is not out of place. Furthermore, in Greek mythology, if not in Plato, gods can be bad and behave badly.

139 This concludes a definition which begins at 271c6. For a concise summary, see 277b4-c6 and note 152. Socrates never explains under what circumstances one form of rhetoric or another should be practiced.

140 The question was first posed at 257d.

Phaedrus: Yes.

Socrates: Do you know how best to gratify god in the matter of speeches, whether in the making of them or in the delivery?

Phaedrus: I have no idea. Do you?

c **Socrates**: I can report what I heard from our ancestors but only they know the truth of it. If we should discover this ourselves, would any of these mortal speculations concern us?

Phaedrus: That's a silly question. But tell me what you say you've heard.

Socrates: Well now, I heard[141] that near Naucratis in Egypt there was one of the ancient gods whose sacred bird they call Ibis. The name of this divinity was Theuth.[142] He was the first to discover number and calcu-
d lation, as well as geometry and astronomy, besides the games of draughts and dice, but especially he invented letters. At that time the king of all Egypt was Thamus who reigned from the great city of the Upper Kingdom[143] which the Greeks call Egyptian Thebes, and Thamus they call the god Ammon.[144] Coming to Thamus, Theuth showed all his arts and said that they must be distributed to the rest of the Egyp-
e tians, but Thamus asked what benefit there might be in each art. After Theuth explained the merits of each, Thamus censured some and

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141 At 275b3-4, Phaedrus will imply that Socrates has made up this story. While the story echoes the conflict between Zeus and Prometheus regarding the Titan's gift of fire and many arts (*tekhnai*), including the invention of writing, to humans, it does so in the context of Egyptian and Greek mythological elements. Many Greeks admired the Egyptians for their wisdom, technological skills, and ability to trace their history back over many generations (cf. Herodotus 2.77); so in Plato's *Timaeus*, an Egyptian priest recounts the ancient myth of Atlantis. In Plato's *Philebus*, Thoth is involved with another story about the alphabet, one among the many, diverse myths the Greeks had about the origins of writing. Naucratis was a Greek trading colony.

142 Theuth (or Thoth) is the Egyptian god of writing, numbers, and geometry, and is represented as an ibis. The Greeks associated him with Hermes, no doubt because both were associated with weighing and leading souls. Hermes' role as *psychopomp*, "leader of souls," is analogous with Socrates' definition of rhetoric as *psychogogia*, "guiding souls." See 261a8 and 271c10, and note *106*.

143 Upper Kingdom, *tou ano topos*, perhaps punning on "upper place."

144 The Egyptians believed in god-kings. I accept Postgate's emendation of *thamoun* (Thamus) for *theon* ("god"). According to Herodotus (2.42), Ammon, also known as the sun god Ra, is the Egyptian name for Zeus; This god-king differs from a philosopher-king in that he pronounces, more in the manner of a prophet (cf. 275c8), than of a philosopher exploring the truth of a statement.

praised others, depending upon whether Theuth seemed to speak beautifully or not.[145]

The story goes that Thamus said many things to Theuth about each art—both pro and con—the details of which would take too long to go through. When speaking about letters, Theuth said: "This branch of learning, my king, will make the Egyptians wiser and will improve their memory. The drug[146] for memory and wisdom has been discovered!"—to which the king responded: "Oh, Theuth, the greatest of technicians,[147] one person is granted the ability to beget the things of art, another the ability to judge what measure of harm and benefit they hold for those who intend to use them. And now you, father of these letters, have in 275a your fondness for them said what is the opposite of their real effect. For this will produce a forgetting in the souls of those who learn these letters as they fail to exercise their memory, because those who put trust in writing recollect from the outside with foreign signs, rather than themselves recollecting from within by themselves. You have not discovered a drug for memory, but for reminding.[148] You offer your students an apparent, not a true wisdom. For they have heard much from you without real teaching, and they will appear rich in knowledge b when for the most part there's an absence of knowledge, and they will be difficult to be with since they appear wise rather than really being wise."

Phaedrus: Socrates, how easily you construct stories about Egypt or any other place you want.

Socrates: But, my friend, those at Zeus' sanctuary in Dodona claim that the speeches of oak trees were the first prophetic words. Because people back then weren't wise the way you young are today, it was enough

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145 For speaking well (*kalos*), also see 274b7. According to this argument, to speak well means to speak with an understanding of the true nature of the thing discussed.

146 Greeks were particularly sensitive to the fact that a *pharmakon*, "drug," could have a positive or negative effect. Frequently, Greeks said that drugs came from Egypt. For other occurences of this word in the dialogue, see note *19*. Writing as a "drug against forgetfulness" is already found in a fragment of a play by Euripides, the *Palamedes*, a figure who like Theuth is an inventor of writing, numbers, draughts and dice. By the end of the fifth century it was a commonplace in tragedy to view writing as a drug. Cf. Nightingale, 149-54; Ferrari, 280-81.

147 In Greek, technician derives from *tekhne*, translated throughout the dialogue as "art."

148 Although Ammon seems to be dismissing writing as merely a reminder, Socrates uses the same word in the palinode when he says that a person who correctly handles the "reminders" of the soul's "recollection" of forms will be initiated into the perfect mysteries (cf. 249c).

for them in their simple-mindedness to listen to an oak or a rock so
c long as it spoke the truth. But perhaps it makes a difference to you who is speaking and where he comes from. Why don't you consider this alone: whether it is as they say, or not?

Phaedrus: You're right to rebuke me; about letters it does seem to be just as the Theban king says it is.

Socrates: So, the person who thinks that he is leaving behind an art in written form and the person who receives it thinking that there will be something clear and secure in these written forms would be exceed-
d ingly simple-minded and truly ignorant of Ammon's prophecy, if he thinks that written speeches are anything more than reminders for a person already in the know about the things jotted down.

Phaedrus: Yes, very true.

Socrates: This is what makes writing clever and really analogous to painting, Phaedrus.[149] A painting's creations stand there as if alive, but if you question them, they remain in complete and solemn silence. The same for words written down. You might suspect that they would speak as if they understand something, but if you ask them about anything in the text in hopes of learning something, the words signify only one
e thing, and always the same thing. And once something is written down, every speech is whirled about every which way, picked up as well by those who understand as by those who have no business reading it, a speech having no idea to whom it should speak and to whom it shouldn't. Ill-treated and unjustly abused, a speech always needs the help of its father because it is unable by itself to defend or help itself.

Phaedrus: Also, very true.

276a **Socrates**: But let's consider a different kind of speech, a legitimate brother of that one, and ask how it comes into being and how it is by nature better and more capable.

Phaedrus: What is this and how do you mean that it comes into being?

Socrates: One that is written with knowledge in the soul of one who understands; this is able to defend itself and it knows when and to whom it should speak, and when and to whom it shouldn't.

Phaedrus: You are referring to the speech of the person who knows, a speech living and ensouled, the written version of which would justly be called the image.[150]

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149 The word for painting, *zographia*, literally translated means "alive or life writing"; it could also mean "animal writing."

150 *Empsykhon* (also used at 245e6) literally means "having soul (or breath) in it" and is usually translated as "animate" or "breathing," but these translations obscure the link between living speech and soul. See note 55. Many

Socrates: Exactly so. And tell me this. Would a farmer with half a brain **b**
sow seeds in all seriousness, if he cares for his seeds and wants them to become fruitful, in the summer in the gardens of Adonis—you know, in a flower box—and would he rejoice seeing them bloom beautifully in eight days; or, whenever he did this kind of farming, would he do it for the joy of play and Adonis' festival? But when he farms seriously employing his art and sowing in proper soil, he would adore[151] what he sowed when the things he planted attained perfection in the eighth month.

Phaedrus: Yes, Socrates, he would probably do one thing seriously, the **c**
other differently in the way you said.

Socrates: Shall we say that one who has knowledge of what is just, beautiful, and good is less intelligent regarding his seeds?

Phaedrus: Far from it.

Socrates: Then, he won't be serious when he writes these things in black water,[152] sowing with a reed pen words which are incapable of defending themselves and incapable of teaching the truth adequately.

Phaedrus: No, it's not likely.

Socrates: It certainly isn't. But he sows his gardens of written words, it **d**
seems, in the joy of play and he will write, whenever he does write, to build up a treasure trove of reminders both for himself in case he reaches forgetful old age and for all who walk down the same path, and he'll take pleasure watching the tender shoots in the garden grow. But when others indulge themselves in other kinds of play, finding pleasure in drinking parties and whatever is related to these, our man, it seems, instead of this kind of play will engage in the things I've just mentioned.

Phaedrus: In contrast to that vulgar play, yours is very beautiful and noble, **e**
Socrates, befitting a person who is able to play and make fables about justice and the other things you speak about.[153]

Socrates: Yes, like this, my dear Phaedrus, but it is far more noble, I think, to be serious about these things when a person uses the dialectical art

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of the arguments and words in this sentence are also found in Alkidamas' speech (see Appendix D): speech is alive and ensouled; written speech only a copy, unmoving, and a painted figure. But Alkidamas does not stipulate that a speaker know the truth about which he speaks. Compare Socrates' comments at 275d. See note 37.

151 See Glossary under *To Love*.

152 I.e., ink.

153 Cf. *mythikos hymnos* of 265c1. Phaedrus may be referring jokingly to Plato's *Republic* which "makes fables" (cf. 2.378c, 382d; XX.501e) about justice. See Glossary under *Fable*. Consider the distinction between human and divine speech at 259d and note 102.

and selects an appropriate soul, sowing and planting his speeches with
277a knowledge, speeches which have the means to defend themselves and the one who plants them. These speeches are not fruitless but bear seed from which other speeches, planted in other fields, have the means to pass this seed on, forever immortal, and to make the person possessing them as blessed as is humanly possible.

Phaedrus: What you say is even more beautiful and noble.

Socrates: Now that we have agreed on these things, Phaedrus, we can decide the remaining questions.

Phaedrus: What are they?

Socrates: We have come to this point in the discussion to look at the following: how we should examine our criticism of Lysias for his speech
b writing and, with regard to the speeches themselves, how do we judge which ones were written with art, and which ones without. But, I'd say, we have shown with due measure what is made with art and what is not.

Phaedrus: It seemed so at the time, but remind me again, how it went.

Socrates: Until someone knows the truth about each of the things he speaks or writes about and is able to define everything according to itself and, having defined it, knows how to cut it up again according to its forms until it has come to the state where it can be cut up no more; and until
c that person sees thoroughly into the nature of the soul according to these same principles, discovering the form that most fits each nature, and accordingly makes and arranges his speech, supplying intricate or multi-colored speeches, covering all the harmonic modes for an intricate or multi-colored soul and supplying simple speech for a simple soul[154]—only then will he be able to manage the class of speeches artfully, to the degree that it is within its nature to be artful, either with respect to teaching or persuading something, as the entire earlier discussion revealed to us.[155]

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154 Cf. 236b7-8 where *poikilos* ("intricate, multi-colored, or dappled") also describes one kind of speech. In the *Republic*, *poilike* is used, as here, to describe the complex or intricate soul. See notes 35 and 131.

155 This summarizes 259e1-274a5. Although rhetoric is an art dependent upon words and eros a divine madness awakened by sight, the two have much in common: they can be either multi-colored or simple, though one by nature, the other by art. Most importantly, both have the capacity to see thoroughly into the nature of souls, to select a suitable soul, and to move it, whether through rhetoric or erotic madness, towards the truth and the company of the gods. Like the divine form of eros, a proper understanding of rhetoric depends upon a true understanding of the soul and, as such, is "beneficial" for both the active agent and the recipient of that agency: i.e., for both the rhetorician and the one addressed, for the lover and beloved, at least to the extent that such art is humanly possible.

Phaedrus: This is exactly how it appeared to us.

Socrates: But regarding the question—whether it is good or shameful to **d**
speak or write speeches, and whether it is fairly reproached or not, didn't we just a little while ago in what we were saying make perfectly clear-

Phaedrus: What sort of thing did we make clear?

Socrates: -that we are within our rights, whether anyone else says so or not, to reproach any writer—whether it be Lysias or someone else, who has written or intends to write whether for private use or a public cause when writing something political proposing laws in the belief that his composition contains great lucidity and lasting value. Even if the entire multitude should praise it, not knowing the difference between a waking vision and a sleeping dream[156] (when writing about justice and injustice, or good and evil), is grounds in point of fact for reproach. **e**

Phaedrus: It certainly is.

Socrates: But it's a different matter for a person who believes that in a written speech on any subject there is necessarily much playfulness and that no speech, whether written in measured speech or not, can ever be taken too seriously—for that matter, the case is really no different for things recited in the way that rhapsodies are delivered simply to persuade without any thought of raising questions or offering instruction. He's aware that the best of them were really written as reminders **278a**
for men who know, and he also believes that only what is said about things just, beautiful and good—and these only when they are taught and discussed for the sake of instruction and actually written in the soul—only then can they be clear, perfect, and worthy of seriousness. And he believes that the speeches of this sort should be regarded as his legitimate sons, principally the sons within himself (if any is discovered therein), and secondarily any of that speech's sons and brothers which have sprung up simultaneously in a worthy manner in the souls of other men.[157] But he bids farewell to the other discourses. Such a man, Phaedrus, is likely to be such as you and I might pray to become. **b**

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156 The distinction between a waking vision (*hypar*) and a sleeping dream (*onar*) here may be parallel to the earlier distinction (at 276a8-9) between a speech which is living and filled with soul and a written composition which is an image (*eidolon*) of it. See note 150.

157 Hackforth on this passage: "A man's legitimate spiritual children are primarily those truths which he himself has discovered by a process of dialectic, and secondarily those which, while logically consequent upon the former, are actually reached, again dialectically, by others. The distinction no doubt reflects the relation between the head of a school (such as Plato himself) and its members or disciples building upon his teaching." For "composed in measured speech" above, see note 37.

Phaedrus: In every way possible, I hope and pray for what you are saying.[158]

Socrates: So then, let's say that we have played out our discussion of speeches with due measure.[159] Now go and inform Lysias that we have gone down to the spring of the Nymphs and the shrine of the Muses
c and heard speeches which commanded that we inform Lysias and anyone else arranging[160] speeches, and Homer also and anyone else who has arranged poetry with or without the accompaniment of music, and thirdly that we inform Solon and anyone else who has in political speeches written tracts that he calls laws: if a person has arranged these pieces knowing wherein the real truth lies; and if he is able to defend them when submitting his writings to cross-examination; and if he can when speaking expose the trivialities of written things, then such a person should not have a name which derives from
d these pursuits but be given a name related to what he has taken seriously.

Phaedrus: What names do you assign him?

Socrates: To call him a *wise* person, Phaedrus, is too much, and only befitting a god, it seems to me. But a lover of wisdom or a name of this sort would be more appropriate and harmonious with his nature.

Phaedrus: And not at all contrary to his nature.[161]

Socrates: But, on the other hand, when a man possesses nothing more worthy than what he has arranged or written, endlessly turning his
e pieces this way or that, putting bits together, then tearing them apart, won't you be completely within your rights to call him a poet[162] or prose-writer of speeches, or writer of laws?

Phaedrus: Yes, surely.

Socrates: Say these things, then, to your companion.

Phaedrus: What about you? What will you do? Certainly, it wouldn't be right at all for you to neglect your companion.

Socrates: Who's that?

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158 Phaedrus has now been fully won over and persuaded.

159 Plato is probably quoting from Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* which concludes with "we have played this out in a measured way."

160 The verb for arranging in this section is *syntithemi*, related to but not identical with the conventional noun used in rhetoric to discuss arrangement, *diathesis* (cf. 228a).

161 *Apo tropou*, for this translation, I follow Thucydides (1.76); following Plato's *Republic* (470b) and *Theaetetus* (143c), de Vries translates: and nothing "beside the mark."

162 *poietes*. See Glossary under *Unskilled speaker*.

Phaedrus: The beautiful Isocrates. What will you report to him, Socrates? What shall we say he is?

Socrates: He's still young, Phaedrus, but I'm willing to say what I predict he will be called. **279a**

Phaedrus: What's this?

Socrates: His innate talent, I'd say, is at a higher level than anything we have seen in Lysias' speeches, and he also has a more noble character, so it wouldn't be that astonishing, in light of the speeches that he is now working on, if, as he matures, he dwarfed the work of his literary predecessors, but if the present pursuits should not satisfy him an even more divine passion might lead him to greater heights. For, my friend, a love of wisdom—of what sort, we can't judge yet—lies instinctively in the mind of that man. **b**

I shall go to my darling Isocrates and deliver this report from the gods of this place, and you deliver your report to your darling Lysias.[163]

Phaedrus: Agreed. But let's be going, since now even the stifling heat is more gentle.

Socrates: Shouldn't we pray to the gods here before going?

Phaedrus: Yes, surely.

Socrates: Dear Pan and ye other gods who dwell here, grant that I become beautiful within and that my worldly belongings be in accord with my inner self. May I consider the wise man rich and have only as much gold as a moderate man can carry and use. **c**

Is there anything else we need, Phaedrus? For me, our prayer was said with due measure.

Phaedrus: Make it a prayer for me, too. Friends have things in common.

Socrates: Let's be going.

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[163] Socrates says that Phaedrus is Lysias' lover at 236b5 (cf. 278e4) (as we learn from the palinode, lovers seek out like-souled people; 252c3-253c6), but in several instances in the dialogue, Socrates and Phaedrus (playfully) act as if Phaedrus has changed roles and is Socrates' beloved (243e4-8 and 261a 2-3; cf. 265c2-3).